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Lakas, Kampi presidents resign to fast-track merger
NEWS / A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GUIMARAS GOLD Most sought-after mango variety is grown on 8,000 hectares on Guimaras Island and will be on display at the trade fair in the province as it celebrates its Manggahan Festival. It's well worth the celebration for the export-quality fruits are certified free of pests, mango seed weevil and mango pulp weevil. It is allowed entry into the United States, Australia, South Korea and other Asian countries. MIKE ALVAREZ/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Trial of Erap pal ordered

Dante Tan charged in BW stock scandal

By Dona Pazzibugan

REVERSING A LOWER court's decision, the Court of Appeals has ordered the criminal prosecution of businessman Dante Tan, a crony of deposed president Joseph Estrada, and seven others for the insider trading and stock price manipulation scandal that hit Best World (BW) Resources Corp. in 1999.

The BW stock scandal caused the near collapse of the Philippine stock market.

At the impeachment trial of Estrada in the Senate on Jan. 13, 2001, a few days before he was ousted, former Treasury Secretary Edgardo Espiritu testified that Estrada jointly owned BW Resources with Tan.

The appellate court's Special Division reversed the ordersissued by the Pasig Regional Trial

TRIAL/A6

SEEMS LIKE EDSA I A man hands out flowers to Thai soldiers on Monday in Bangkok confronting antigovernment protesters who are supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The protests mimics the Philippines' "People Power" phenomenon that stunned the world in 1986. AP

CRISIS IN THAILAND

Gov't mounts first show of force

BANGKOK—THAI SOLDIERS fired volleys of shots in the air to disperse protesters blocking key roads in Bangkok yesterday, as the first show of force by the government since declaring emergency rule left 74 wounded.

In contrast to a complete security breakdown over the weekend, where the Asean summit was canceled after demonstrators stormed the venue, security forces began to take action.

Demonstrators were hijacked buses and Molotov cocktails hurtling towards military lines in a chaotic battle at one intersection, where soldiers fired assault rifles and tear gas as they advanced, Agence France Presse reporters said.

The supreme military commander vowed to restore order using "all possible means," a day after embattled Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva announced a state of emergency to curb protesters who had disrupted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Leaders Summit in the resort city of Pattaya last Saturday.

Trucks carrying hundreds of troops moved into an area near Government House, the prime

GOV'T MOUNTS/A14

Hostages 'going crazy,' beg for help

By Christine O. Avendaño and Tarra Quismundo

SAYING THEY WERE EXHAUSTED and stressed out, two workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Easter Sunday pleaded with Philippine authorities to help secure their release from nearly three months of captivity.

Swiss Andreas Notter and Italian Eugenio Vagni spoke by phone to Sen. Richard Gordon who said yesterday this was the "proof of life" that he had asked for and gotten from their Abu Sayyaf kidnappers.

Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, played to reporters his taped 13-minute phone conversation with the two ICRC workers being held hostage in the Sulusan forest on Jolo Island, from where they were kidnapped Jan. 15 while working to improve the water supply in the provincial jail.

A third hostage, Filipina Mary Jean Lacaba, 37, was freed April

HOSTAGES/A6

DepEd gets 'proof of life' of 6 Zambo teachers

By Jerry E. Esplanada

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ALL SIX public school teachers abducted in groups of three by bandits in January and March are alive and "have remained unharmed" in undisclosed locations in southwestern Mindanao, Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said yesterday.

Lapus made the announcement after getting "proofs of life" from Zamboanga Mayor Celso Lobregat, head of the crisis committee in this city, and regional education officials.

Lobregat showed Lapus color pictures of teachers Freires Quizon, Jeanne de los Reyes and Rafael Mayancado, who

DEPED GETS/A6

Lucio Tan: We're not selling out

By Doris C. Dumlao

CHUNKS OF SHARES IN VARIous companies under the Lucio Tan group have been anonymously placed on the block, prompting the tycoon to declare yesterday that there were no plans to sell or dilute his majority stake in any of the companies.

Industry sources yesterday told the business that the selling

LUCIO/A6

White House top dog a gift from Ted Kennedy

WASHINGTON—THE SELECtion was one of the White House's most tightly kept secrets.

The first family has settled on a first pet—a 6-month-old Portuguese water dog that the Obama girls are naming Bo.

President Barack Obama's daughters, 10-year-old Malia and 7-year-old Sasha, picked a black and white pup, a White House official speaking on condition of anonymity told

WHITE/A6

TOP SECRET IS OUT The Obama girls chose a 6-month-old Portuguese water dog and are naming him "Bo." AP

'JoCap' son of Huk chief, original Red party founder

By Fe Zamora

IN THE END, WHAT MATTERED most were not the groundbreaking stories he had written or the unimpeachable sources he had cultivated, but how he stood above the maddening race for scoops in the defense beat.

This was how colleagues in the Defense Press Corps (DPC) remembered Undersecretary Jose "JoCap" Capadocia, who died with seven others in a helicopter crash on April 7.

JoCap was DPC president from 1989 to 1990—years of

JOCAP/A14

US ship captain freed; fears up for Pinoys' safety

HARBOR, KENYA—US NAVY snipers killed three Somali pirates and freed the American sea captain held at gunpoint in an operation regarded as a victory for the world's most powerful military but one that is unlikely to quell piracy off the African coast.

Angry pirates vowed Monday to retaliate for the deaths of their colleagues, taking fears for the safety of some 200 foreign sailors still held hostage in more than a dozen ships anchored off lawless Somalia.

Vilma de Guzman, whose husband is among the 21 all-Filipino crew of the chemical tanker MT Stolt Strength, fears Phillips' rescue may endanger the lives of other hostages. The tanker has been held hostage by pirates since Nov. 10.

"It might be dangerous to the remaining hostages because the pirates might vent their anger on them," she said. "Those released are lucky but what about those who remain captive?"

She also feared that while the

US SHIP/A8

Brangelina want Pinoy baby, reports UK paper

By Jerome Aning, Nikko Dizon and Pachalia Colocado

HOLLYWOOD POWER COUPLE Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt reportedly flew into the country last week, but not to enjoy the country's famed beaches or to watch a bloody reenactment of Christ's crucifixion.

The British tabloid Daily Mail reported on its website Sunday that Jolie "took time off from the set of her latest film, 'Salt,' to travel to Manila with the in-

BRANGELINA/A14

ANGELINA Jolie with her Ethiopian adopted daughter Zahara in Mumbai, India, last November. AFP/FILE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Cloudy-flurries (rain or heavy rain) most of the day; rain and scattered thunderstorms while Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy-rainy skies; temperature and humidity will be relatively high. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy-rainy.

Metro Manila	31°C (Cloudy)	Baguio	19°C (Cloudy)
Angeles	31°C (Cloudy)	Batangas	31°C (Cloudy)
Tuguegarao	31°C (Cloudy)	Cubi	31°C (Cloudy)
Laoag	31°C (Cloudy)	Dagupan	31°C (Cloudy)
Legazpi	31°C (Cloudy)	Iloilo	31°C (Cloudy)
Puerto Princesa	31°C (Cloudy)	San Fernando	31°C (Cloudy)
Subic	31°C (Cloudy)	Tacloban	31°C (Cloudy)
Zamboanga	31°C (Cloudy)	Cagayan de Oro	31°C (Cloudy)
Davao	31°C (Cloudy)	Cotabato	31°C (Cloudy)

Publication Mail Tariff PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER 2201 to 2204 • Tariff PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER 2201 to 2204

Second FRONTPAGE

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RP drivers stranded in Dubai

A MIGRANTS' WELFARE ADVOCACY GROUP YESTERDAY called on the government to investigate the plight of 137 Filipinos in Dubai, United Arab Emirates who were stranded there since they arrived in January for supposed jobs as bus drivers.

The Manila-based Ople Policy Center said the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) should immediately preferred suspend the license of the OFWs' recruiters, CFM International Services and Efficacious Agency Inc. and its counterpart in Dubai, Al Tawasuk Technical Services.

"The thing is we keep telling the public to deal only with licensed recruitment agencies. In this case, the victims followed that advice. But believe that the POEA must choose its records of unscrupulous agencies like CFM," the center's president, Susan Ople, said in a statement.

"The same number of OFWs involved constitutes an act of economic sabotage by this licensed agency. We urge immediate action and for the owners of the agency to be banned from leaving the country," the former labor undersecretary added.

Citing media reports from the UAE, the center said the 137 stranded OFWs were forced to live in a camp near the Jebene city dump. Desperate for cash, they were forced to scrounge for the cans and other scrap metal and sell these to buy food.

Relief convoy

Filipino community leaders, who heard about the story by word of mouth and e-mail, formed a relief convoy on Good Friday and Black Saturday. The convoy traveled to the OFWs' camp and brought donated canned goods, water, rice, fish and other food items.

The drivers are sharing cramped quarters and their building gets only three to four hours of electricity from generators, according to Ople.

Vice President Noli de Castro, who was in Dubai over the weekend, met some of the OFWs. He said that that as chair of the government's inter-agency Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force he would ensure that "legal actions would be taken against persons responsible."

De Castro has ordered immediate funding assistance for the 84 authorized overseas Filipino workers who are now housed at the Filipino Workers Resource Center in Dubai.

De Castro held a meeting with some 200 Filipino workers in the UAE over the weekend, before proceeding to Damascus, Syria where he met with President Bashar al-Assad to inaugurate the new Philippine embassy building and hold bilateral meetings with various officials.

A Philippine welfare officer, Elmer Arvisu, also visited the stranded bus drivers in Dubai.

The drivers said they paid as much as P150,000 to CFM in exchange for jobs at RTD, Avisco of the drivers have been staying in Dubai waiting for the promised jobs since January.

Loan

They said CFM asked each of the recruits to take out a P150,000 (13,418 dirhams) loan from a financing agency in Dubai (recommended by CFM) and made them sign undated checks (each P400,000 (about 40,000 dirhams) addressed to a bank and the lending agency, payable in 15 months.

Ople said that one of the drivers, 32-year-old Rudi guevarra, contacted the center on Sunday for help in seeking justice.

Olivier said the agency promised him and his colleagues good-paying jobs in Dubai's government transport agency, the Roads and Transport Authority. He said some of the drivers, including those who quit local jobs despite court of review, have been working to be hired by RTA since January.

The bus drivers, nearly half of whom hail from the province of Bicolo, complained that their passports were being held by Al Tawasuk, preventing them from applying for new jobs.

Bahrag Transit

Ople said majority of the victims were professional drivers who had worked for years in reputable transport companies in the Philippines such as Bahrag Transit. She called on the Philippine consulate to intervene and recover the passports of the stranded workers.

She said the Filipino community here the drivers a photocopy machine so they could consolidate and reproduce all the documents needed to bolster their case. One group of University of the Philippines alumni in Dubai even offered to help the workers put together their petition complaints.

Ople said she would be bringing one of the sisters of the bus driver to the POEA and illegal recruitment unit so she can recount what happened and ask advice on how the driver can go about filing a formal complaint.

Ople also said that the bus drivers were hoping that the Philippine Consulate could help them look for jobs in Dubai rather than for real home.

"Their biggest worry is on how they can repay the lending agency. If they come home, whatever they earn in four drivers want be enough to pay off their loans and still sustain the needs of their families," Ople said.

She said that according to Cleo, one company, the Emirates Catering Service, was willing to take some of the drivers in. Jerome Aquino and Cynthia D. Behera

LAKAS AND KAMPI leaders Prospero Pichay and Luis Villafuerte in yesterday's press conference. RAFT CASTRO

Lakas, Kampi leaders quit to hasten merger

By Cid C. Cabuenaga Jr.

WITH THEIR ATTEMPT TO MERGE GOING nowhere, the presidents of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Kabalikat ng Maunlarang Pilipino (Kampi) resigned yesterday to give President Macapagal-Arroyo total charge over the proposed union.

Speaker Prospero Nograles and Lanao del Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte announced their resignations as Lakas president and Kampi president, respectively in a press conference at the House of Representatives.

Both quit "to unclutch the merger and give President Arroyo a free hand in determining the appropriate leadership structure for the prospective consolidated party."

They also hoped the merger talks would finally put an end to speculation there would be "no election" in 2010.

Nograles refused to comment on whether a purported plan by the President—who is honorary chair of Lakas-CMD and the founder of Kampi—to run for a congressional seat in Pampanga in 2010 was connected to his take-charge role in the Lakas-Kampi merger.

Step by step

"Let us not speculate, let's take it step by step," he said.

Villafuerte said they agreed to give the President total control over the merger because "she has more persuasive power than both of us."

"If you are the head of the country's biggest political parties, narrow or failure in the elections will fall on you, the buck stops with you," Nograles said.

The Lakas-Kampi merger has been in the works since the 2007 elections when administration candidates gathered a beating at the national level due to the rapid rift between the two parties at the local level. But the consolidation of the two forces has been stymied by clashing egos and refusal to share power in the elections.

Nograles said a merger should compel the administration's allies to field a single ticket at the local level next year.

Key to victory

"My subscribers are the belief that a political merger between the two biggest political parties in the country is the key to the administration's victory in next year's polls," he said.

Villafuerte said that with both parties in "electoral preposition mode, there should be no more doubt the elections will be held as scheduled."

A 9-member committee led by presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio has been formed to iron out the details, including a name for the new party, and effect the merger within 45 days or to meet the the filing of candidacies in Nov. 2009.

Panel members are Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos and Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing, both of Lakas, for the national capital region; Cabuari Secretary Gilbert Teodoro of Lakas and Iloilo Rep. Jose Solis of Kampi for Western Visayas; Leader of the Defenders (Lakas) and Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia (Kampi), for the Visayas; and leading contestant for Pampanga Pichay (Lakas) and Santiago del Norte Rep. Francisco Matugas (Kampi) for Mindanao.

Miriam: It'll be war at SC if House approves con-ass

By Christine O. Avendaño

REP. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO YESterday said she and several senators would challenge the House of Representatives in the Supreme Court if the lower chamber pursues a resolution amending the Constitution without the participation of the Senate.

Santiago said they might file a petition for certiorari or ask the high court to compel a separate Senate vote via the resolution that seeks to convene Congress into a constituent assembly (con-ass) to effect changes to the Charter.

She said the Fund of the House non-performance of the constitutional provision on the convening of a con-ass is "completely unconscionable view of our Constitution."

"Our Constitution provides for a bicameral Congress and, therefore, voting should always be bicameral," she said.

Con-ass proponents in the House insist the Constitution calls for assisted voting by both chambers in the matter of Charter change (Cha-cha).

Santiago said she should not think there was enough time for Congress to tackle Cha-cha "unless you use a gassy train," stressing that the people were "not in the mood to go along with the shenanigans of corrupt politicians."

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said the people were not supportive of Cha-cha and President Macapagal-Arroyo should tell her allies in the House not to disrupt her administration with a Cha-cha.

He said he had warned Speaker Prospero Nograles to be mad carefully as the issue.

Senators Richard Gordon and Loren Legarda also appealed to the congressmen to drop their Cha-cha bid.

"Baka mas maraming ay maaring pa kung huwag. Dito nalgit ipit kaysa abang with the entire House of Representatives," Zubiri said he told Nograles.

Meanwhile, meanwhile, said yesterday there was no urgent need to amend the Constitution, not even the economic provisions that President Arroyo was openly supportive of amending.

"It's not a matter of life or death," said Lendel Pantoja, deputy presidential spokesperson, in a mod Zubiri.

"Cha-cha is also [on] the agenda of the President so if it will be realized before her term ended, then it's okay. But if it cannot be realized eye, we really don't have to push it," she said. With reports from Cha Inton V. Esguerra and Leila B. Salaverria

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Pinoy couple deported from Japan

TOKYO—A FILIPINO COUPLE were deported from Japan on Monday, leaving their 11-year-old daughter behind in an emotional row that had drawn wide public sympathy for the family.

Arlan Cruz Calderon, 36, and his wife, Sarah, 30, left Tokyo's Narita airport for the Philippines last night, worn off by their daughter Noriko and a crowd of reporters, said public broadcaster NHK.

The couple were forced to leave after they were found to have entered the country on false passports in the early 1990s, but they had pleaded to be allowed to stay so their Japan-born daughter could finish her schooling in the country.

The government has allowed the daughter, who speaks only Japanese, to stay on humanitarian grounds but insisted the family several weeks ago it would deport all three unless the parents agreed to leave voluntarily.

"I feel sad," Noriko earlier told reporters at their home in Warabi, north of Tokyo. "I won't have deliverance food made by my mother any more. I feel full of uneasiness."

Noriko will remain behind in Japan in the care of a relative of her father's.

The case drew intense media coverage in Japan, and more than 20,000 people signed a petition asking the government to allow all three to stay.

The case also attracted the attention of Amnesty International as well as of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which has asked Japan for information about it.

The parents were expected to arrive in Manila at around 10 last night. AFP

TOKYO: Arlan Cruz Calderon (left) and his wife Sarah say goodbye to their daughter, Noriko, upon departure from Tokyo. AFP PHOTO

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Erap bares Senate list for 2010 polls

SHOWING A FEW OF HIS cards, Former President Joseph Estrada yesterday named a possible senatorial line-up of the Opposition in 2010.

At the Enrileno in Manila Hotel, Estrada said his ambitious included Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Sen. Manny Villar, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and former Sen. Loi Ejercito Estrada.

Lawyer Koko Pimentel, who is still contesting the victory of Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri, is also in the former president's list, as well as United Opposition spokesman Adel Tamano. He also mentioned journalist Ted Failon, Gina de Venecia, Fernando Poe's daughter Grace Poe, detained rebel general Danny Lim, and Deputy Ombudsman Rodolfo Casimiro.

According to Estrada's spokesperson, Ishmael Ricafort, this is just the initial list that he is considering."

Subject to bargaining

It is subject to bargaining, Estrada said that if the Opposition succeeds in fielding only six candidates for the Senate, those who will get the axe will definitely be prioritized for the senatorial lineup.

Estrada's kind list is apparently aimed at speeding up backroom bargaining among opposition factions for a unified opposition slate.

At the Enrileno, Estrada also took a dig at the administration's unity, saying some of President Arroyo's own cabinet members have appointed him for a shot in the opposition slate in the 2010 national and local elections.

Estrada said more than 20 personalities—including cabinet members, congressmen, and senators—have as early as January this year expressed interest in running on his ticket under the opposition banner.

He refused to disclose names but added that Vice President Noli de Castro, a consistent topnotcher in pre-election surveys, was "not yet" among them.

"The situation in Malacañan has not yet settled with us," said Estrada, who was ousted as President in a people power revolt in 2001, convicted of plunder in 2007, then pardoned by his successor.

A former movie star, Estrada insists that he is not out of the political picture.

Kiss of death

"I am 50 percent sure there will be more than one candidate. Other administration candidates will run since no one is taking that high (in the surveys). It is possible that President Macapagal-Arroyo will bet on two horses," he said.

Estrada said that last in, the last election, an endorsement by the President remained a "kiss of death" while administration candidates obligated to defend her acts and decisions and assure the continuity of her policies.

Estrada mentioned Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro as the strongest administration bet, adding that "Vice President Noli de Castro has not shown any effort in disclosing himself as a candidate for the administration."

"We do not know yet his position... If he will be running... as the opposition side," he said.

As for the so-called "united front" led by Chief Justice Reynato Puno, he remarked, "I commend Puno for forming the group. But anybody can claim to be united, even rebels."

On takeover or not he would seek the presidency again, Estrada said he legal team has seen no obstacle to his running. He said he sees it ill-befitting back-to-back decision to run as the opposition vice only if trying to "come to unite under new standard."

Estrada said that the opposition would be meeting in June to decide on a single presidential candidate in the 2010 polls. (With a report by Annaliza L. Andrada)

Erap for President
Manny Villar
Gilbert Teodoro
Miriam Defensor Santiago
Loi Ejercito Estrada
Juan Ponce Enrile
Jinggoy Estrada
Ted Failon
Gina de Venecia
Grace Poe
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Miriam vows to block probe linking Mike A to road mess

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO YESterday said she would block any attempt in the Senate to subcommittee the World Bank controversy if its objective was to implicate the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the alleged collusion of contractors in the agency's flooded projects.

Santiago said her economic affairs committee had not found any evidence linking Jose Miguel Arroyo in the controversy and that she will be coming out with a report "as soon as possible."

She made it clear, though, that she would not bar her colleagues if some senators who did not agree with the way she conducted the proceedings would pursue another investigation of the controversy or engage in what she said was "frenzy shopping."

"In the Senate, a Legislative committee of the Senate is not the National Bureau of Investigation or office of the fiscal," the senator added. "We're not supposed to be conducting a preliminary investigation of criminal cases. We're conducting inquiries in aid of legislation."

She said she would go "if necessary" to the Supreme Court to file a petition for prohibition with a prayer for a temporary restraining order, if the bid pushes through.

Senators decided to look into the World Bank controversy again after Santiago completed the investigation and committee report. The blue ribbon committee is expected to conduct the new investigations.

The WB had banned three Filipino contractors from its funded road projects after claiming that the latter had colluded with one another to get the projects. It also implicated unnamed officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways, some of whom headed the President's barkadas, as well as other government officials, in the controversy.

Puno rejects calls to quit as SC chief

BY VINE

Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno has rejected calls for him to step down from office after he chose to lead a movement undoing "transformational leaders" for next year's presidential and national elections.

"I don't see any reason why he cannot engage in nonpartisan activity in political politics," said Supreme Court spokesman Midas Marquez, in reaction to Makabayan Rep. Teodoro Casiño Bianco's suggestion that Puno should first resign if he wanted to be an agent of change in a political manner.

"Like any retired private citizen, the Chief Justice need not be a politician to advocate moral conversion and try to resuscitate the polluted field. He can do everything he can within his capacity as a citizen and broadcaster as the chief justice," Marquez continued. "In the same manner, he does not shed off his being a concerned Filipino by becoming a chief justice."

Most lawmakers, including presidential hopefuls, welcomed Puno's initiative to convene a "Moral Force Movement" that would help voters choose "transformational leaders" in the elections next year. Dona Pazdiagan

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Davao hit job pays well, says human rights group

SAYING AS MUCH AS P100,000 is a single job, setting a bounty for the Davao Death Squad's ears is a lucrative source of income for the working-class Filipinos who are the DDS's main recruits.

This is one of the main reasons why people join the vigilante group, according to several former interviewed by the Human Rights Watch for its report, "Powerless Against Death Squad Killings in Mindanao," which was released last week.

"More can make far more money with the DDS than any other available occupations," Human Rights Watch said.

The New York-based watchdog said it interviewed many hoodlums who claimed to be either friends or relatives of DDS members which gave them inside information on the shadowy vigilante group that has reportedly killed more than 600 alleged criminals, including children.

'Honest living'

One of those it interviewed extensively was "Ramon", a young man who claimed to have been recruited by the group but decided against joining. He told a close friend last June a death squad member since 2005.

Ramon said his friend used to earn between P70 and P100 a day working rare while being a death squad member paid almost 20 times the amount.

He said he found the offer to become a death squad member tempting because of the money but chose to "continue earning an honest living."

Human Rights Watch researcher Bede Sheppard said the group's interviews with former DDS members were mostly former members of the communist New People's Army, or young men who were suspects of the death squads but joined the group to avoid getting killed.

Human Rights Watch accused Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of giving tacit support to the death squad, because of his continued denial of its existence and his promise to end crime in the area.

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Trial of Erap pal in BW stock scandal ordered

To page 6 | 1

Court Branch 266 in 2007 that dismissed the criminal cases against Tan and seven others for violation of the Revised Securities Act's Section 26 and 27 on stock price manipulation.

The Court of Appeals said Judge Amelita Manahan committed grave abuse of discretion when she absolved Tan, Federico Galang, Eduardo Lim, Jr., Hermogenes Ledesma, Raul de Castro, Emmanuel Esmond Co, Mario Juan and Jimmy Juan from criminal prosecution.

Tan was president of BW Resources Corp., but reportedly left the country.

Tan and his correspondents were accused of manipulating the stocks of BW in 1995, which caused BW stock price to skyrocket from P2.84 on January 17, 1995 to a record high of P5.07 on Oct. 11 when Manotoc gambling tycoon Jimmy Ho accepted an offer to become its chair. But a day after, the stock plunged to P86, causing heavy losses to many investors.

Estrada's call to SEC chair

The slide created Philippine Gaming Corp. had promised to enlist Hugo Ibarra Jr to SBV Gaming and Amusement Corp., which was owned by BW Resources.

Estrada acknowledged Tan was among his contributors to his 1998 presidential campaign.

Estrada was impeached in November 2000 on charges, among others, of intervening with the duties of a public servant when he called up then Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay five times to clear Tan of any wrongdoing in the BW insider trading scandal.

Bobby Dazer's death

When the BW stock scam broke out, Tan listed Bobby Dazer as PR man to stabilize the damage, according to Antonio Carpio, now Supreme Court associate justice, in his column on June 28, 2000, when he was still a columnist for the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"It is possible that during this time Dazer came to know that Estrada had a substantial interest in BW. Dazer may even have come into possession of documents to prove Estrada's ownership of BW stocks," Carpio said in his column.

Carpio also said one "shocking document that has surfaced is a letter by Estrada's own lawyer, brazenly written on Malacañang letterhead and addressed to Tan, demanding the turnover to Estrada of BW

DANTE 'TAN Ho has reportedly fled the country. INQUIRER FILE

stocks worth over P500 million. Tan documents immediately fled Estrada to the BW stock room."

Motive for murder?

Carpio said "the revelation of this document, if proven to be in Dazer's possession at the time he was killed, could establish the motive behind Dazer's killing."

Investigators led by the SEC and the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) uncovered heavy short-buying by Tan.

Tan reportedly sold his shares to friends and clients at discounted rates to jack up the price of BW shares and to show that the shares were actively traded in the stock market.

The SEC and PSE also found that BW's daily turnover skyrocketed only among 10 brokerage firms.

The PSE report said that Jimmy Ang acted as Tan's dummy when he amassed 36.8 million BW shares worth at least P110 million. The shares were allegedly transferred back to Tan.

A certain Cesar Marcelo was cited in the PSE report as having engaged in a significant number of transactions in which Tan acted as the buyer and Marcelo as the seller.

Kiting activities

Three transactions were supposed to have been used to perpetrate Tan's "kiting" activities, which are prohibited under PSE rules.

Kiting is a scheme in which a stockbroker sells his shares to a broker under a special buy-back arrangement to get cash even before the clearing and settlement date, which is two days after the transaction date. When the buy-back date is due, the stockbroker would then sell the same shares under a similar arrangement with a second broker to get cash to pay for the first broker.

Supreme Tan's contention that the charges against them had already been extinguished, the appellate court's Second Division ruled that the new Securities Regulation Code (SRC), which took effect in August 2000, did not decriminalize the offenses penalized under the old Revised Securities Act (RSA).

The appellate court pointed out that Sections 26 and 27 of the old RSA that penalized the manipulation of security prices were reenacted in Sections 24 and 28 of the new SRC.

Wash sales

"The SRC did not modify the elements of the offenses relative to the manipulation of security prices via 'wash sales,' 'matched orders,' 'running the chess,' or 'shoot of IQ' (sale for either)," it said.

Wash sale involves the buying and selling of shares in which there is no actual transfer of ownership. The aim is to create an impression of heavy trading to lure investors to come in and push the prices up.

In matched orders, unlike other kind, are manipulative acts in which a buyer and seller agree to a number of shares in a bid to drive market activity.

Provisions of old law reenacted

The decision, penned by Associate Justice Jose Catral Mendoza, said the petitioned provisions in the old law were reenacted in the provisions of the new law.

The appellate court also pointed out that the situative nature typical of the RSA and reenactment of its provisions in the SRC "negates the premise that there is no legislative intent to repeal or decriminalize the offenses and punished under the RSA."

"Hence the acts penalized before the reenactment under RSA continue to remain offenses punishable even under the new law, unless they have been altered by the repeal," the court added.

Associate Justices Portia Aliño-Hormachuelos and Ramon Barin concurred in the decision.

The charges against Tan and his associates were filed on March 1995 before the Pasig RTC. Four years after, Tan filed a motion to quash on the grounds that the RSA had already been repealed with the enactment of the SRC.

The Pasig RTC granted Tan's motion on Aug. 15, 2007. The other accused followed suit with their own motion to dismiss the charges against them, which the court granted on Dec. 21, 2007.

The government appealed the lower court's ruling.

Lucio Tan: We're not selling out; after 'substantial' shares put on block

To page 6 | 1

party was the family of the late brewer Florencio Tantoco, a longtime friend and business associate of Tan who had been a minority stockholder since the company went listed.

Put up for sale were shares in some of the country's biggest companies like Fortune Tobacco Corp., San Miguel Corp., Allied Banking Corp., Philippine Airlines, Philippine National Bank, Bloomberry Resorts and Hotels, Eastern Shipping Lines and Mirant International.

An advertisement that appeared in the Inquirer yesterday on Page B8 and titled "Lucio Tan Group Shares for Sale" invited a lot of speculation on the identity of the seller and the motivation behind the sale.

Forbes magazine has placed the net worth of Tan's family at $1.4 billion.

One thing for sure

"Dozens of the absolute majority shareholdings in the Lucio Tan Group of Companies led by business tycoon Lucio C. Tan are not selling or disposing of their shares," the group said yesterday in response to the advertisement.

"We do not know who among the minority shareholders placed the ad announcing their desire to unload their shares. One thing is for sure: It's not Mr. Lucio Tan. The shares he owns directly and those he holds by virtue of proxies assigned to him by other majority shareholders are not for sale," the statement added.

Most of the companies listed in the ad were included in a brief case filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government against the Lucio Tan

LUCIO TAN Rise and power of a family feud are emerging. INQUIRER FILE

group at the antigraft court Sandiganbayan after the Edsa people power revolt in 1986 that ousted the Marcos regime.

The sequestration order has been lifted but the ownership dispute is still being contested in the Sandiganbayan. The heirs of Ferdinand Marcos are staking a claim on the Tan companies.

The PCGG has been running after Tan since 1987.

Industry observers confirmed that the shares consisted of a "minority" block but could not give an estimate of the number of shares for sale in each of the companies and for the market price.

But other sources said the heirs of Tantoco, who died barely a month after Lucio Tan group takeover the inception of many of its companies, had expressed intention to unload the shares when their post-death dried a few years ago.

One PAL board seat

The family, for instance, holds one board seat in Philippine Airlines corporated by the post-battle son Oscar Tantoco.

The post-mortem said his wife Socorro Tantoco, a former Commission on Elections chair, and his children Carmel Marie Tantoco, Jose Florencio Tantoco, Jr. and Lucio Tantoco III are the principal beneficiaries of the new law.

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The government appealed the lower court's ruling.

One analyst said the seller may have put the shares on the block in order to get the best price. The Lucio Tan group may end up buying these shares anyway, the analyst said.

Other analysts said the shares might have been already offered to the Lucio Tan group—as shareholder partnerships usually require a right of first refusal—but these may not be enough incentive for the group to each into buying the shares.

Filing of Income Tax Return

02 DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2009 DAYS TO GO

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 14, 2009
Octave of Easter: Tuesday

1st Reading: Acts 5:34-42

Peter said to the people, "Let Israel therefore be sure that God has made Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified." When they heard this, they were deeply troubled, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do, brothers?"

Peter answered, "Each of you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that you may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise of God was made to you and your children, and to all those from afar whom the Lord may call." With many other words Peter gave the message and appealed to them with this plea, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!" Those who accepted his word were baptized, some three thousand persons were added to their number that day.

Gospel: Jn 20:11-18

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she bent down to look inside; she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, and the other at the feet. They said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered, "Because they have taken away Lord and I don't know where they have put him." As she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize him. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and answered him, "Lord, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Rabboni"—which means, Master. Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them: I am ascending to my Father, who is your Father, to my God, who is your God."

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord; and that is what he said to me."

Commentary:

Mary's journey to the tomb ended in the beginning of a new life for her. It was because of her faithfulness that Jesus called her by name and promised her that he would ascend to his Father. Her encounter with Jesus is the beginning of her mission to announce to the brethren that we have an experience of how impressive it is to give witness to Christ, even to those who may not believe or dismiss us. Mary's heart was consumed by bad times. This is powerful experience, because sometimes we almost change our hearts during that time. Jesus, however, called to Mary's mind other moments in the life of Jesus that were filled with an equal reflection of God's image. Through her relationship with Jesus, Mary felt so happy: we are called to rejoice in faith and share the good news that Christ has risen. As Christians, we are to commit to sparing efforts, doing deliberate voluntary and unpaid kind acts of love and service to others. Let us pray that we, like Mary, have the courage to announce the Lord by our lives.

Christian Communications Foundation Inc. // Manresa S. J. // Fr. Wilfrido Villaflor, SJ // Fr. Jose Ramon Villarin, SJ // Fr. Jose Cruz, SJ // Fr. Ranhilio Aquino Callanta, SJ // Fr. Jose Clemente Ma. Hilario, SJ // Fr. Roberto Rivera, SJ // Fr. Ruben Tierra, SJ // Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, SJ // Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ // Fr. Jose Dizon, SJ // Fr. Ernesto Jumapao, SJ // Fr. Antonio Moreno, SJ // Fr. Jose Cruz

Glitch delays flights

By Jeremaine Kaing

A DOZEN OUT-bound flights from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Nia) in Manila were delayed yesterday morning after technical problems forced Airlines to handle passenger check-in manually, taking more time than usual.

In a public advisory the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) said only two planes were awaiting new departure schedules—Zanbay Pacific Airways Flight CE 906 and CE 905. Both are bound for Hong Kong and scheduled to leave at 11:55 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. today.

The 10 delayed departures included one flight each from Emirates, United Airways, Qatar Airways, Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines, KLM, Eva Air, Asiana Airlines and two flights from Korean Air.

Miaa media affairs officer Connie Bunag said technical check-in operations at Nia went restored at noon after the check-in system bogged down at 4 p.m. Sunday night.

The automated check-in program, called the Common User Terminal Equipment (CUTE) system, is maintained by the Societe Internationale de Telecommunications Aeronautiques.

No explanation was made about the cause of the glitch.

The Firm scores 100%

VILLARAZA CRUZ Mendoza & Angeles (CRUZ LAW) once again scored a 100-percent passing rate in the recent bar examinations among the law graduates it recruited, the firm announced recently.

Led by third placer Oliver F. Bailey Jr., all 17 CRUZ LAW graduates all passed the grueling annual examinations and now join the ranks of the Firm's highly skilled and multi-disciplined lawyers, it said in a statement. It said that for the past 39 years of its existence, CVC LAW has been the only law firm in the Philippines that has maintained a 100 percent passing rate among the law graduates it recruited.

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RP seamen unfazed by threats of Somali pirates

MORE FILIPINOS THAN ANY other nationality are being held hostage by Somali pirates, but there was no dearth of seafarers Monday for jobs yesterday in Manila and in the Hanoi of more confrontations.

With dozens of cargo vessels anchored empty and idle in most ports around Asia because of the financial crisis, hundreds of sailors were gathered at the city's Luneta park, around which many hotels—favorite center for seafarers—are located.

"Three pirates are the least of our concerns," said Joel Bandola, 48, a chief steward on an oil tanker.

"I'll take the risk rather than see my family die in hunger. If something terrible happens to me aboard my tanker, my wife and children would get many thing from my employer first, they get nothing."

About 40 percent of 900,000 seafarers around the world are Filipinos. And of nearly 200 sailors being held by the pirates, about 100 are from the Philippines.

Although the hostages have been mentioned relatively well so far, the pirates have threatened reprisals—one after Sunday's dramatic rescue of a US cargo captain by special forces, who killed three pirates and took one into custody.

Aware of dangers

Most job seekers said they were aware of the dangers in waters near Somalia and around the delta region in Nigeria where pirates are active.

But there are no unfolding their eagerness to get back to sea.

"The risk we face is really worth it," Bong Malpuedo, 35, a supercargoman on bulk carriers.

"We get extra pay and the chances of getting caught by pirates either in Nigeria or Somalia, we can really plan. We have come to accept these pirate attacks as part of our job."

Although Emirates and Aleppo-based ship owner announced about Filipinos held captive by Somali pirates, they believed the sailors would not be harmed because their kidnappers were only interested in ransom.

"As long as you obey them, you do not smoke or attempt to escape, you're just fine," Bandola said, recalling what his ship's captain had told them in case pirates would capture them.

Said give them what they want, there's no point in angering with them. They just want to get your cargo, your money and other valuables."

RP prefers peaceful means

There have been calls for tougher measures against pirates groups, but the Philippine government has favored more peaceful means to free the captives. In any case, Manila, largely lacking the resources the United States or Europe could bring to bear, is effectively helpless in dealing with the pirates.

Ed Malaya, foreign affairs spokesperson, said the government was "relieved to learn about the rescue" of the American ship captain and assured families of 68 Filipinos held in Somalia that Manila was doing its best to secure their release.

Some sailors did plan to play it safe.

"The best way to avoid becoming the political chess people is to stay away from them," said a 42-year-old seafarer captain at the Luneta park who gave his name only as Rando.

"So, I'm looking for vessels that operate only around Asia or in Europe. Before I sign to, I would ask if the shipping company operates worldwide. Then there's a chance the vessel would come near Somalia, so I'd rather be on the safe side."

Reuters

US ship captain rescued; fears raised for Pinoys' safety

Front page A1

rest of the US captain was given no much attention, other hostage-takings have received little setback in the media.

The drama surrounding Phillips and his ship—the first American taken hostage in the Gulf of Aden—has made headlines around the world, pitting a lone captain held by pirates on a tiny climbing boat surrounded by warships from the world's most powerful navies.

News of the rescue caused the captain's crew in Kenya to break into wild cheers, and brought tears to the eyes of people in Cape Richard Phillips' hometown in Vermont, half a world away from the high-seas drama.

President Barack Obama called Phillips' courage "a model of for all Americans," and said he was pleased about the rescue, but added that the United States needed help from other countries to deal with the threat of piracy and to hold pirates accountable.

The stunning resolution to a five-day standoff came on a blazing eight-nine sounds in choppy seas Sunday after a pirate on an enclosed lifeboat held an AK-47 assault rifle to the back of Phillips, a 53-year-old longtime captain.

Rear Adm. Bill Gortney said Phillips was tied up and in "no-

Pirates used to use resistance

A fourth pirate surrendered after boarding the Bainbridge shuttle in the day and could face life in an FBI options. He had been making modest attempts for a wound in his hand and was negotiating with US officials on conditions for Phillips' release, military officials said. The wound may be from an ice pick that a crew member threw into one pirate's hand after the pirates boarded the US-flagged Maersk Alabama on Wednesday.

The fight put up by the Alabama crew left the pirates with just two hostage on a small lifeboat, putting them in a much lifeboat position. Prior to this attack, Somali pirates had become used to no resistance once they boarded a ship and negotiations that yielded million-dollar ransoms.

Reprisal attacks expected

Yet, Sunday's blow to their lucrative activities is unlikely to do much to quell the growing pirate threat that has transformed one of the world's busiest shipping lanes into one of its most dangerous. It also risked provoking reprisals attacks.

"This could escalate violence in this part of the world, no question about it," said Gortney, the commander of US Naval Forces Central Command.

The situation rescue followed a similar operation Friday carried out by French navy commandos, who stormed a pirate-held sailboat, the Tanit, in a shootout at sea that killed two pirates and freed four French hostages. The French rescue of the vessel was also killed in the assault.

"Every country will be forced all the way it treats us, in the future, America will be the same," Abdullahi Ladi, one of the pirates holding a Greek ship anchored in the Somali town of Gaan, told The Associated Press. "He will become (the) the killings of our men."

"From now on, if we capture foreign ships and their respective countries try to attack us, we will kill them like hostages," Aamar Abdeh, a 30-year-old self-proclaimed pirate, told The AP from town of Bosaso in Puntyland.

Abdeh said US forces have "become useless. I swear."

Up until now, it has been rare for Somali pirates to harm captive foreign crews. Several years ago, a crew member of a Taiwanese fishing boat hijacked by six months was killed by pirates, but it appeared to be an isolated incident.

The pirates still hold about a dozen ships with more than 200 crew members, according to the Malaysia-based piracy watchdog International Maritime Bureau. Hostages are from Bulgaria, China, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, the Philippines, Russia, Taiwan, Tuvalu and Ukraine, among other countries.

Phillips was not best to recover. At minimum of gunfire and the US Navy's help there could be more seeking considerably on a US warship after receiving a medical exam.

Aboard the Bainbridge, rather passed along a message from Andrea Phillips to her husband: "Richard, your family loves you, your family is praying for you, and your family is saying a marvelous Easter egg for you, so, keep your wits and I'm."

Phillips himself delivered any praise.

"I'm just the bribes. The real heroes are the Navy, the SEALs. There's what have been my homes," Phillips said by phone to Zdarsky Lisa Limited president and CEO John Bombart, the company board told reporters.

Wild cheers

With some of the nurse, Phillips' 17,000-ton ship, which docked with the 19 members of his crew (returns to Mombasa, Kenya, emptied into wild cheers. Some waved an American flag and one fired a bright and then skyward celebration.

"Yeah yeah it!" said co-worker AFM Rena, pumping his fist to the air.

Maersk spokesperson Jeroen Hilchil choked up as she stood in the street outside, reading the family's statement off a clipboard in Underhill, Vermont.

"Andrea and Richard from operations, I think you can all imagine their joy and what a happy moment that was for them. They're all just so happy and relieved.

Ship carried food aid

"Andrea wanted me to tell the crew that all of your prayers and good wishes have paid off because Captain Phillips is safe," she said.

The ship had been carrying food aid bound for Somalia. Islands and Uganda when the incident began hundreds of miles off Somalia's northern coast. Maersk ship Crew members said they saw pirates scrambling into the ship with ropes and hooks from a small boat before being on the surface of the Indian Ocean for hours.

As the pirates dove to the ship Phillips said he came to both themselves in a cabin and surrendered himself to safeguard his men, crew members said.

Phillips was then taken hostage in an enclosed lifeboat that was soon shadowed by three US warships and a fixed-wing aircraft in standoff that grew by the hour.

Phillips jumped out of the lifeboat Friday and tried to swim for his freedom but was recaptured when a pirate fired an automatic weapon into the water, according to US Defense Department officials.

The president's government, which barely controls any territory in the country, welcomed news of the rescue.

Abdulkhadir Walayo, the prime minister's spokesperson, told Reuters that the US would not be the only country to rescue one of its citizens from the pirates, "although the government has wanted this issue to end peacefully." *AP*

DepEd gets 'proof of life' of 6 Zambo teachers

Front page A1

were reunited in person on Jan. 23 as they made their way to the Department of Education office in Zamboanga City to pick up materials for the first day of school, a regional education official said.

Aside from the pictures showing them in apparent good health, they also sent a letter dated April 10 seeking prayers for their immediate release.

"Let us pray for our release... Be sure hoping that there will be somebody who can help us out of here," they wrote on the back of a Golden Key organizer pack.

They also called on "flood humanitarian" to send them more than 20 urgently needed items, including instant coffee, canned goods, instant coffee, noodles, cigarettes, underwear, sanitary napkins, toothbrushes and toothpaste, "instead of money to buy them."

Lobregat said an "summary" had been entered the letter in the body of one of the readers.

Constant communication

"The good thing" is that there is "constant communication between the kidnapped teachers and their families," Lobregat said.

Jocelyn Jaime, Jocelyn Espinore and Noemi Manok, all teachers of the Josefina-Josefina Elementary School in Ungia, Zamboanga Sibugay, who were seized by gunmen on March 15, have also reportedly been "in touch" with their respective families and education officials.

Lobregat expressed confidence that the kidnapped teachers would be released by their captors. But he did not comment when asked to provide a timetable.

Pereiro and Delos Reyes are teachers of the Antas Bituon National High School, and Sinangaan, of the Limolong Cluo Elementary School. Both schools are on Basilan Island, some 16 kilometers from Zamboanga City.

The kidnapped had earlier demanded ransom of P6 to P5 million in exchange for their release.

Like Lobregat, Basilan dist. also superintendent Dolores Alcantara cited the government's no-ransom policy.

'Sagip Garo'

She added: "Our teachers come from your families and with nothing more than to support their parents, brothers and sister ... These teachers give their time to nurture the children's minds and hearts. They are not soldiers. They are not armed. They are not politicians. They are not rich. They are not powerful. They are not threats to anyone. They are not enemies of the state. They are not terrorists. They are not criminals. They are not anything that would warrant their abduction."

Alcantara appealed to the kidnappers to release the teachers, saying they are "not worth anything to you."

"We, in DepEd, acknowledge the deep concern of the people for the safety of the six teachers. The concern and relentless of the six victims have been difficult sights and days of worry and despair. We are therefore, today to conquer fear, concede those to pain, but also to take hope that the missing six will soon be returned by their abductors through our resolve to act collectively through 'Sagip Guro.'"

Earlier in a statement, Lapus condemned "all forms of violence and harassment inflicted on helpless teachers as we appeal for justice and ask leaders elements to spare our schools, teachers and our children."

"We ask teachers perhaps a no life with the unfolding and the unforgettable testimonies for lasting peace and prosperity," he said. "They should be protected, not harassed."

Covenant of cooperation

"The concerted governments of Zamboanga Sibugay and Basilan, as well as the local government of Zamboanga, Isabela and Lamitan, have forged a "covenant of cooperation" in a move to stamp out kidnapping and other criminal activities in the region.

The officials of these local governments units stressed the need to "build a future of public order and safety and effectively communicate the same to their respective communities for the residents to live in a community and citizens out of fear but of peace and security."

Earlier, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro had ordered government troops to pursue the kidnappers regardless of their affiliation with Moro secessionist groups.

According to Teodoro, soldiers should not waste time in negotiations and local government units should be more vigilant in their respective areas in order to help authorities fight kidnappers.

Basilan bandits behead hostage

By Jocelyn R. Uy

BANDITS HAVE EXECUTED one of two men they seized after raiding a village in Basilan on Sunday, Friday, Easter spokesperson Capt. Noel Detrella said yesterday.

Government troops pursuing the bandits roughly numbering 40 found Conor Gherett outside in the town of Lamitan on Sunday, but authorities expressed the belief that they are to Basilan," Detrella said.

He said was still attached to his body when our soldiers found him. It appears that the weapon the kidnappers used was a bolo," Detrella told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo by phone.

Basilan, 40, was seized along with Eddie Gherett by a group suspected of members of the extremist Abu Sayyaf and the separate Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Detrella said.

The group attacked Brgy. Area in Lamitan while the residents were observing Good Friday rites.

During the attack, a man identified as Jaidon Clemente was shot dead, Detrella said.

Gherett, 27, is the seventh person being held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

The report died not include that three teachers because we have no indication that they are to Basilan," Detrella said.

He was referring to Jocelyn Jaime, Jocelyn Embayor and Noemi Manok, who were kidnapped at gunpoint while conducting enrollment in Zamboanga Sibugay on March 15.

A separate Abu Sayyaf band in Jolo, Sulu, is still holding two European tied Cruz and worker's that it seized on Jan. 15. (See story on Page A1.)

Hostages 'going crazy'

From page A1

2... two days after the kidnappers threatened to behead one of the hostages if the troops completely withdrew from the island—a demand rejected by the military.

The wounded said that Abu Sayyaf leader Albader Parad had called him on Monday. Thursday to ask him whether the military had withdrawn from the area, but he said he told Parad he did not know.

But he said he told Parad he first wanted proof Ingal and Nottoz were alive.

On Tuesday, Parad allowed the ICRC captives to talk to Gordon.

"They are not in a very good condition," said the 62-year-old Ingal. "I can't make it anymore ... Time is very short for me."

Constantly on the run

Ingal, who was reported to be suffering from diabetes, said on the first he was "okay" but was "very stressed out" because of all the "moving and running".

"This is difficult for us," the Italian said.

In the conversation with Gordon, Nottoz also asked to "take me out as soon as possible," saying "you're like going crazy ... we had nothing to do."

Nottoz, 38, said that Ingal needed surgery because of his hernia and that the Italian had difficulty walking and standing.

He also thanked Gordon for the head, "Philippine Republic," for their "kindness and humanity" to him, but said he had lost it when the group had to move to escape military pursuits.

$5.5-M ransom denied

Gordon told the men he would do his best to bring them home soon. He also said he would inform authorities about their conversation and would try to ask for help from his friends in Malaysia.

"I am pleading for you," the senator said.

Gordon also played his part in conversation with Parad, who denied Sulu Governor Tan's claim that the Abu Sayyaf was demanding P5.5 million for the release of Ingal and Nottoz.

"We're not asking for money," Parad told Gordon in Filipino.

Gordon said the Malaysian Islamic leader Ibrahim Ameda Pano about his latest communication with Parad and the two hostages. He said Pano told him that he was amenable to recommend the pullout of troops from Barangay Ragay and Sibuli in Indanan.

Told that Pano had stated the government would publicize its troops if a second hostage is released, Gordon said "that is a good negotiating point."

Elite police units deployed

Earlier, Pano said that additional police officers were deployed yesterday to reinforce troops keeping a cordon around the site in preparation for a military assault.

"There is no request for a pullback that is going on for directly related to a release of the hostages, there are not willing to consider that," Pano told reporters.

"Because of what they want is to be able to release the hostages to ensure their own safety, we are willing to bend over backwards to do that. But we pull back or pull out for the sake of pulling out," he said.

Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Verzosa said the fresh deployment includes some 100 officers from the elite Special Action Force and 60 officers each from the Regional Mobile Group headquarters in western and central Mindanao. *With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy and John Mosquito, Inquirer Mindanao*

US soldiers in Balikatan war games told to behave

By Amadeo Roque
Inquirer Central Luzon

FORT MAGSAYSAY, NUEVA ECIJA—Unlike most military officials who have warned American soldiers participating in this year's Balikatan war exercises to "behave, be professional and respect the sovereignty of the Philippines."

Lt. Col. George Charbarcos, commander of the US contingent participating in the Philippine-US Balikatan 2009, said contact with civilians would be limited in this year's exercises that started on Monday.

He said a meeting with relatives of about 90 Filipino-American soldiers in the US contingent is also impossible.

"We will be keeping this camp except for some relevant events in which we are required to go out," he said.

A total of 207 American soldiers and 107 Filipino troops, mostly from the 491th Infantry Battalion of the Army's 9th Division, are participating in the exercises that would run to this 40,000-hectare camp, some 20 km east of Cabanatuan City, until April 30.

'Respect civilians'

Charbarcos said the American troops were ordered to be "professional at all times ... [and] respect civilians."

"Basic instructions [are] a big warning here in light of recent events involving American soldiers participating in joint exercises in the Philippines.

Among them was the courtroom of US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith for the rape of a Filipina during a rest and recreation break at the Subic Bay Freeport.

There were also allegations that western entertainers were being brought in (US soldiers) for their "pleasures and allies."

"No foreign entertainers (We will be staying in the camp)," said Capt. Ken Ola, head of the civil-military office of the 91st multi-purpose.

"All of us soldiers who have Filipino blood will have no chance to see our relatives or visit their places," said Ola, a master's graduate of the University of the Philippines who joined the US Army in 1987.

Jungle survival training

The only time they will go out and meet civilians will be for a medical-dental mission and for a cleanup of some schools in nearby communities, he said.

Charbarcos, also the commander of the US contingent last year, said he and his men are looking forward to the jungle fighting and jungle survival training in which Filipino soldiers excel.

Asked which part of the jungle training they would exhibit more, he said: "The rules shift." The exercise involves catching a snake, skinning and cleaning it, and cooking it for food.

"We have training for jungle fighting and survival but we must admit that Filipino soldiers are the experts. We enjoy training with them," he said.

Charbarcos, who said his great grandfather was a Filipino, said he admires Filipino soldiers for their discipline.

He said Filipino soldiers are well-trained and he expects American soldiers to learn from them. He also said they are prepared to teach their Filipino counterparts in using modern gadgets and weapons.

Maj. Gen. Jovy Aduncloud, vice commander of the Philippine contingent, asked the troops to know and learn from each other.

"We urge you to go the extra mile to establish friendship and learning with our soldiers. In the future, you may see each other again in the performance of your respective duties especially in the global mission of the United Nations," Aduncloud said during the Balikatan opening ceremonies here.

Ricardo D. Naval; 81

NOTED RESIDENTIAL HOMES ARCHITECT and builder Ricardo D. Naval of Novaliches died on Sunday night. He was 81.

A self-made entrepreneur, he also helped build and restore several Catholic churches in Navotas and Malabon.

He is survived by wife Belen Camenforte, children Dovie and Robert Pontillas, Ric and Leilani C. Naval, Roman and Rowena M. Naval; grandchildren Brad, Clarbert, Andre, Gerard, Gaila, Angela, Mika, Leonard, Mike, Rob, Pedro and Rob; and siblings Pilar Elorag, Rose Amado, Tita and Percy Gomez; nephews and nieces.

Wake will be at the Naval residence on 1204 M. Naval and Dampha-i St., Navotas. Interment will be on Saturday at Bo Immaculate Garden Park. Novotas after a 2 p.m. Mass at the San Jose Parish Church.

INQUIRER

OPINION

Risking all for truth

IT IS STRANGE THAT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo should talk about truth in her Easter message. She said that "in our lives at Christmas, we ... manifest our love for the truth in [Christ's] life and teachings. We must love each other and risk our all for the truth, because God commands us so and Christ did so first for us and expected no less from us."

Strange for a President who during her Cabinet members from telling the truth about matters that the citizens of the republic should know about. Will she now tell the truth even if it hurts her and kills her politically? Will she now "risk [her] all for the truth?"

Mrs Arroyo's way to Malacañang the past eight years has been a long history of lying, dishonesty and deception. In the light of her Easter message about "risk[ing] our all for the truth," will she now tell the truth about an alleged $2-million bribe for the approval of the $470-million contract for the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric plant?

Will she now tell the whole truth about the "Hello, Garci" taped conversation in which she purportedly asked then Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to make sure she would win by one million votes in the 2004 presidential election?

Will she now tell the truth about the P1-billion Macapagal Boulevard in Pasay City, arguably the most expensive road project in the Philippines, if not in the world?

Will she now tell the truth about the P726-million fertilizer scam in which taxpayers' money was said to have been used by elective officials in the 2004 elections?

Will she now tell the truth about the $329-million NBN-ZTE deal, for which the left her husband's sickbed (he had just undergone a life-threatening operation) to witness the signing of the agreement in China?

There are many other cases where Mrs Arroyo avoided telling the truth or directed her key officials not to tell the truth at legislative hearings but we do not have enough space to discuss all of these.

Mrs Arroyo said in her Easter message that "we must risk our all for the truth because God commands us so." But is she ready to risk everything for the truth? Is she ready and willing to risk the presidency for the truth? Will we ever know the truth about the many controversial cases (the details of which she wants hidden from the public?

One case among many

IN A SERENDIPITOUS SENSE, THE HIJACKING OF the US freighter Maersk Alabama by Somali pirates, the resistance put up by the crew and the subsequent and subsequent rescue of Capt. Richard Phillips have produced some good. Good because the hijacking of an American-flagged ship is finally forcing international attention on Somali pirates. The pirates seized 42 ships in 2008, got $30 million to $50 million in ransom and are still holding about 230 seamen of various nationalities hostage.

Before the Maersk Alabama seizure, the rich and developed countries did not pay much attention to Somali pirates. After all, they probably thought, why should they when most all the crew members seized came from poor countries like the Philippines, Bangladesh and Pakistan? But once an American-flagged freighter was hijacked and an American captain was taken hostage, the rich nations sat up and took notice and their media covered each twist and turn of the drama on the high seas.

Now that this one hijacking case has been resolved, what will happen next? Will the international community take concerted action to rid the Horn of Africa of the Somali pirates? Some measures have been proposed:

- The crew of non-military ships should be allowed to arm themselves so that they can resist the hijacking attempts of Somali pirates.
- Punitive action should be taken against the pirates in the form of preemptive targeted strikes.
- Ship owners and insurance companies should be persuaded not pay ransom to the pirates.
- An international force should patrol the Horn of Africa to prevent the pirates from piying their trade.

In the meantime, steps have to be taken to rescue or obtain the release of about 250 seamen, including 92 Filipinos, still being held hostage by the Somali pirates. The problem has not ended with the rescue of one American captain.

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Who cloned whom?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DEMOCRACY CLOSE BEHIND A JAPANESE CLONE? Or was it the other way around? They field politicians who moonlight as executives.

Malaysia's High Court sentenced Thursday two politicians to hang. Inspector Ahlah Hadi and Corporal Sirul Azar Akbar were from an elite unit guarding the prime minister. They shot Mongolian model Altantuya Shaariibuu. They then blew up the 28-year-old's corpse with C-4 military explosives. Their "no body no case" defense flopped.

Prime Minister Najib Razak denies links with this interpreter-and-mother of two. Altantuya spoke Russian, English, Mandarin and Japanese. She also had an affair with one of Najib's closest aides, Abdul Razak Baginda.

The court dismissed Baginda's bid suspicions, from graft to blackmail, premier. Would true politicians act so a death squad's orders were?

"Where are the bodies of Salvador Pualby? Jacky and Emmanuel Corbito?" lawyers of Sen. Panfilo Lacson ask. "No body, no case."

Of course Dacer and his driver were kidnapped by an "elite" Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force unit. Both were interrogated and strangled and, like Altantuya, their bodies were burned. Of former policemen identified as members from dental plates, rings, etc.

Not me, insists Lacson who led the PAOCTF then. Don't look at me, says Lacson to Jose, the prosecutor and President Joseph Estrada. Drop dead, he is "Ilipin," the alleged mastermind.

Did PAOCTF's Michael Ray Aquino and Group Marcos track down Dacer on their own? Both are in AFP-federal prison and await trial indefinite. Where they remain, still they sing ...or swing?

PAOCTF's second unit, their secret file documents with Dacer. Were they about the double million peso BMW stock scandal? Perhaps Jeb to know. That stock worked for Jade's regime.

Lawmaking here pegs the Malaysian press free. Economic pressures are more insidious. "The Malaysian government is the behind-the-scenes owner of almost all local media," the Bayanihan Nasal Press Institute notes. Thus, Ikata Chief Justice Reynato Puno should resign his post first before leading the Moral Force Movement. So says Rep. Rufus Rodriguez.

"While it is true that Philippine society needs moral recovery, there is also no denying that much of it is political reform and one must join the political fray to be an agent of change in that field," Rodriguez said. "Perhaps the Chief Justice, his main stake a conscious effort not to be dragged into politics."

Let's see if this makes sense: Philippine society needs moral recovery. Moral recovery is largely a political exercise. Only politicians should engage in a political exercise. Jesus and (as we know from) are what Philippine society needs to morally recover from. Only the people that society needs to morally recover from may initiate a moral recovery program.

How's that for Catch 22, Philippine style?

What on earth does Prime Minister to resign to remain for moral recovery? At the very least, there is a difference between politics and partisan politics. Bedtime politics we may leave to politicians, politics we may not. Politics is too important to leave to politicians in the same way that economics is too important to leave to the economists and law is too important to leave to the lawyers. Playing is the ecosystem. It is far too important to leave to senators. But that's another story. It is not only the privilege to engage in politics, it is our duty to do so ...as citizens of a democratic republic.

At the very least, unlike politics and religion, which are oil and water, politics and morality are hand in glove. The two do not sit by idle well, the two may not be separated. Or else, well, look at what we have now: a total eclipse of the sun, a populist one Benigno Ninoy Aquino and assign an kidnaps others they bring morality back to politics, such as when Jaime Cardinal Sin drew up guidelines for the faithful for the 1986 elections—which did not help anyway. Bishop got elected by a landslide. Bishops ought to resign from the business of politics. If not from the clergy, however, when they tolerate lack of morality in politics, such as when Fernando Capulla continued to face GMA on

Transformative

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

the faithful despite "Hello, Garci."

Pinto does have the right, legal and moral, to launch a moral recovery or moral transformation movement. I wish him well and hope only that he pushes the project to its logic point.

Size boat, as far as near your television goes, I hope his movement pushes deeper into the meaning or significance of those elections. I myself do not see the problem in finding the transformative leader in those elections. I see the problem in transforming one in our situation.

It was Gilly Brazil who used the word "transformative" in referring to Barack Obama and in justifying his support for him unlike that for his best prompt, John McCain, in the elections. Powell might have had a horrible Hobson choice, but he had a good insight about America. He saw rightly that the elections last year were not just about comparing the relative virtues of the presidential bets; they were about comparing life and death. They were not just a choice between Republicans and Democrats, which is a choice between Republicans and Democrats invariably serious, they were a choice between good and evil.

It was an ordinary time, it was the worst of times and the best of times. America demanded the opposite of George W. Bush last year in the same way that the Philippines demanded the opposite of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. That was not Hillary Clinton for those are times that it was Guy Lomot for us. And that was so even though Bush was not running for president, just as it is as far as even though GMA is not running for president. The issue was for America then and Bush or the opposite of Bush. The opposite for us remains GMA or the opposite of GMA.

That's the same message for Cebu Mayor Tomas Osmeña, now in Texas for a Holiday cancer operation. There have been 1,04 killings in Cebu since Osmeña and police chief Isidro Lubrin unleashed vigilantes. Not a case has been solved either.

Whether in Kuala Lumpur, Davao, Cebu or Luzon, there's a business being behind: wallbuilding summits. Read the record.

"Ardah [grim] me an SIG weapon and a lawyer ushering 'shoot to kill' the Chinese hoodlums," testified before the Senate. "Ardah's wife, Jun Ho, was the one who kept the list of persons to be killed. She was supervising, she said.

"Ardah testified the woman in the ground and I fired towards the left side of her head... Ardah noticed movements in the area. He ordered me to fire. I then emptied the weapon. With Ardah's help, I put the big one over the head to prevent blood from spilling.

"In the woods ... I attached the explosives to the victim's head while Ardah attached explosives on the victim's legs up to the abdomen... After detonation, I pulled the victim with two of them left the scene and headed towards the [Special Operations Office] in Subic [where] where I received 400 niggets."

Such impunity cannot stand without official tolerance. It's ritual here.

"After our 'work,' we'd meet at Mitt EYY'ins, on Baesline highway, near St. Francis Funeral Home," a Cebu vigilante said. "That's where we get paid for our work."

In Davao, "the men who gun down or, not that is becoming their common, kills children in the streets always never cover their faces," writes UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston.

SPR expected senator-poor voter-offer to stop setting about high and the Mangudao Al Shaiya, Chinese and Sultans who support the party in power for guns ... are "scum of the earth," he wrote. "Seeking out justly prosecuting yourself."

...

E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com

Civil war brewing in Thailand

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THAILAND which forced Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to cancel for the second time the Asean Summit, known as Filipinos dumbfounded. While there has been a lot of volatility over the decades in a country like South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines, the Thais have seemed to be blessed by the land of political violence they have exhibited over the past two years. The Thais are famous for their smiling, peaceful Buddhist culture.

To be sure, there have been 18 military coups in that country since the 1930s, but in the last few years, Secretaries and former Ambassadors to Thailand Rafael Seña used to tell me, in those coups which would happen, that two military factions would simply bombard either each other's bases or their seat would win over the others and take over the country. Then there has always been the king who has always been loved and revered by the people, and whose presence as a unifying personality was enough to quiet the political tempest.

* * *

But today's situation is different. The king has not been heard from and one is left wondering if this popular figure is still in control. Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and the yellow shirts supporting his opponents, who took over the international airport last year and caused the cancellation of flights, are the key to Thailand's survival, first to Thaksin, who is believed to be funding and orchestrating the red shirts' protest actions and is now calling for a "revolution." The other is the powerful military. Another disloyal move by the military could risk declared by Abhisit has led to speculation that the military's loyalty may be divided (which wouldn't be surprising). What's easy to see is that the military, which enjoyed power and influence in Abhisit no more than ten years ago after ruling for several years, may grab power again if a bloody and vast Burmese humanitarian (which looks like the case, as the political maneuvers on both sides appear to be unbearable in its cruelty.

Fernando Thailand is desperately Called upon

* * *

Israeli Welfare Security Responsible Called upon

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cabahug

the column and later was reported in the Inquirer to warning that "the sale of a famous organ from an living person to another constitutes trafficking, which is punishable under RA 9208, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003." The statement was by the buying or selling of laborers is punishable with up to 20 years in prison. But latter was trapped by two DPR programs Gado Mission and I held some weeks back whereas National Bishop and Brotherhood Association Hamper Hall, and Bishop Foundation at the Philippines officials Miguel Romero and Commander de Leon stayed that Lat. are "donations" answer a specific need among the populations, and that it would be better to regulate them and monitor the donors' health conditions.

* * *

It seems there's a debate among government agencies on this issue, notably between the Department of Health and the Department of Trade and Industry, namely, Cabral and Health Secretary Francisco Duque. I can sympathize with Cabral who deplores the exploitation of "able-bodied males from farming communities in Luzon who are recruited and brought to Manila for medical workups to both foreign and Filipino recipients." She stresses that this becomes a critical time for the DOH is in its mandated to protect the vulnerable, even guilty of poor medical care of recipients. Still we share of compassion Duque, however, that the selling of kidneys is a reality here and the thing to do is to impose stricter regulation rather than an outright ban, which would force the trafficking to go underground. Even when they navigate the system of Senator Secretary Joel Gonzalez' Bureau of Labor, my recipient from his kingdom driver), he noted advocate toward regulation.

In this country, few would care to talk about kidney transactions for fear bigotry as part of organ social taxation, but it is happening. Unfortunately, the issue of kidney donation came to the fore when American singer Natalie Cole suffered renal failure and was "flooded with offers of donations. To my mind, the most sensible thing is for Congress to take a good second look at RA 9208, as the dynamics of the issue have changed.

* * *

The past few weeks have brought personal tragedies to two in the media. First, columnist Joel Sandoval, who had been ill for some time, was called to admit's bosom a few weeks ago. It's not too well. Known outside media circles that one of the most decent human beings in the business. Well's favorite anecdotes is about how he was once taken at the Magallanes Village Clubhouse or at Tiger at Ayala Ali. Sandoval, "The boss" as we were regularly to motorists Skelly to get out of her house, which was difficult as she needed to be in a wheelchair all the time, and to raise funds for her medical bills. Dina Umerlee-Quimora's life in Qatar has been severely limited by arthritis and the deterioration of vision. Skelly would join in, to eat cheese underwing a table behind her memory of the lyrics, which remained sharp to the end. Dina's life in Qatar has been severely limited by arthritis and the deterioration of vision. Skelly would join in, to eat cheese underwing a table behind her memory of the lyrics, which remained sharp to the end. Dina's life in Qatar has been severely limited by arthritis and the deterioration of vision. Skelly would join in, to eat cheese underwing a table behind her memory of the lyrics, which remained sharp to the end.

We also lost Petra Quiboyaran aka Cajudo, who was very helpful to and supportive of Filipino journalists in Qatar. She was the wife of former Philippine Ambassador to Romania and Myanmar Noel Cabacis, who remained his friends until. And those was the very generous Eloisa Perreras, the President's appointment secretary and Cabinet aide. Always the lady-like life of any gathering. I was glad that the Palace didn't censor that photo of Gloi weeping for her departed officials in Baguio. Even a President who is very much in the public eye has to show that she values human sentiments and grieves for those who perished in the crash who had served her most loyally.

Escapism

At Large

Ninez Cacho-Olivares

I HAD ONCE CONFESSED WITH A WOMAN when she suddenly confided that she was a voracious reader of romance novels. I was in awe of she lived with the daily chores and scrudery of vocations; she was supplementing her husband's income by writing romance novels. Yes, romance novels.

When I commented that she must have found the creative knack, she replied that at all honesty, she found the exercise of losing herself in make-up romance novels a welcome and much-needed escape from the daily investigation of domestic situations," she admitted.

The woman's story came to mind when I read an article in the New York Review of Books that appeared in the Sunday Inquirer. Entitled *Escapism*, it sought to explain why "like a web-surfing engine and what books are actually at the center of the oversized boom living happy ever after, American are losing themselves in fantasy (and predictable) romance novels." Romance novels, the article said, have taken bookseller are struggling to lure readers, sales of romance books are outstripping most other categories of books and giving some literary-to another-writer-haggish readers."

The article, written by Laura Miller, perceives in the boom fantasies, "the genius of the romance novel," which reported a 32 percent increase in earnings over the same period last year, with titles in the "Harlequin" and "Silhouette" lines of Harlequin and Mobile reports flush, sales of romance novels are up, even as the bookseller notes that over all 2008 sales were likely to fall between 4 percent and 5 percent. "These figures may underestimate the health of the genre, since they do not reflect significant portion of sales come from readers like Mrs. Muir that are not tracked by Bookscan."

"Take the Depression-era readers who found Margaret Mitchell's tale of Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara in the Wind," today's readers are looking for an escape from the grim realities of layoffs, foreclosures and the sinking BOLO balances," notes Bach.

AND it isn't just bodice-rippers (because the covers of such books almost always show semi-

American classics, occupied the top-selling literature.

Another new development is the emergence of hybrid product-line. Social distress which is local one based on the storylines of successful foreign products, sometimes to the same titles, and the genre-mixing seems to reflect audiences' "who-knows" style a Mexican romance that catapulted this actress Thalia into a household name him, was to make into a local version by GMA-7 and translated a new title to Filipino Mexico who before them had been a popular Filipino actor and singer. Also, the real-life story of any gathering. I was glad that the Palace didn't censor that photo of Gloi weeping for her departed officials in Baguio. Even a President who is very much in the public eye has to show that she values human sentiments and grieves for those who perished in the crash who had served her most loyally.

* * *

The key to quality education

I AM A RETIRED TEACHER WHO has been touched by the seemingly untiring efforts of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) to re-discover the country's educational system by introducing workable approaches and situations to improve the quality of education in our countries.

I agree 100 percent that the

teacher is the key to "quality education." Its intelligence, resourceful and loving teacher can make the difference. It is the teacher who guides the student to see his God-given talents to blossom into real and mature himself, each hand, follow his heart and reach for his star. We have heard testimony about successful students who, despite being assigned to remote villages, have produced outstanding students from those areas of specialization.

The students, in turn, return to their communities helping each other and to send and teach. These responses to share has been mentioned in their minds by their teachers.

To teach is a gift of love, I, therefore, believe that there should be more investment in the education process for aspiring teachers. Not everyone is "called" to become a teacher. If a student's attention is just to be a teacher for the 40 hours, now is time for he is on the wrong place, he has, misused, self-esteem, relying, harmful, etc. Students and workmates are only seen, some as effective teaching. A reasonable teacher will know where to get those materials for his own use and integrate these into his God-given wisdom to make things happen.

—ARLEY C. DIOSO,
92 Bignay, Quezon District,
Quezon City

MM needs Wawa River Project, now

ALLOW US TO ELABORATE ON the Pinto-Wawa Project and how it would benefit Metro Manila's water consumers.

1. Wawa Dam, which is located in Montalban, Rizal, used to be the main source of Metro Manila's water supply from 1908 until 1969, the rest 909% developed it to its larger Dam. Today, dam supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water supply but is badly in need of rehabilitation. Moreover, August Dam has an estimated life span of 50 years. Once it reaches the end of its life, the economic disaster would be far greater than the inconvenience during the August rehabilitation, and certainly Metro Manila residents cannot face without a viable water supply for months or years.

2. Luzon Integrated Basin Resources and Development Group Inc. (LIBARD) applied for a water permit with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) in 2005. For up to now (10 years later), the NWRB is still studying it, however, the Pinto-Wawa Project is a good for 6 million people, so how quickly can this go. This, while Metro Manila water consumers are crying and begging President Macapagal-Arroyo for "Tubig!"

3. LIBAR and NWRB in the Court of Appeals (CA), and obtained a favorable decision. LIBAR has also asked the CA to ask NWRB for exemption for non-action on technicalities.

4. Compared to the pollution of the Laguna Lake, Wawa River's pollution is minimal. Laguna Lake's pollution from wildlife, manure, oil spillage, fish waste emissions, and toxic chemicals because of the use of commercial cages and motorized fishers, 2,656 barangays and 10,000 industrial companies. All these have ruined Laguna Lake into the biggest sewage in the Philippines.

5. Metro Dam's water source was would be 50 percent less than the Laguna project's $1 billion. There is a small number of squatters in Wawa while in Laguna there are 10,000+ squatter families to contend with.

6. Metro's watershed is 10 times bigger than La Mesa Dam's watershed.

7. For the record, SLRB can declare as a priority zone SOBLED watershed water in a area of PINAGLIA. The volume could be increased to 200 MLD to service Montalban, San Mateo and Marikina. And within three years, a can also declare 600 MLD of untreated water to La Mesa Dam for P11,+++.+. In the meantime Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWC) is Antipolo will be even much lower because, instead of MWC managers pumping water to service Antipolo, SLRB will run only one—for delivery point in higher for 100 meters and the treatment is shorted by 20 kilometers.

In sum, tapping Wawa's surface water—instead of sourcing water from Laguna Lake and Lisbon Lake—will definitely assist Antipolo and faster delivery of water to Metro Manila. SLRB's Wawa River Project is the only solution to the water problem of Metro Manila water consumers and the political will of the Aquino administration in order to WWRB to approve its still water permit of 1500 MLD and direct the MWSS to sign MAP a Memorandum of Agreement with LIBARD so that it is assisted to start to build rolling.

—OSCAR L. TOLEDO,
president,
San Lorenzo Ruiz Pinto
Development Corp.

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. DC2009-03-0004

DEFINING A TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE SYSTEM OF AWARDING SERVICE CONTRACTS FOR CONDUCTING GEOLOGICAL, GEOPHYSICAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. DC2009-03-0004

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Presidential Decree No. 1442, otherwise known as the Act to Provide for Exploration and Development of Geothermal Resources, Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 972, as amended, otherwise known as the Coal Development Act of 1976, and Section 4 of Republic Act No. 387, otherwise known as the Petroleum Act of 1949, as amended, otherwise known as the "Oil Exploration and Development Act of 1972," direct the Philippine Government to promote and accelerate the exploration, development and utilization of indigenous energy resources through service contracts and petroleum agreements through competitive contracts with contractors;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7638, as amended, otherwise known as "The Department of Energy Act of 1992," mandates the DOE to promote reliable, cost-effective supply of energy, promote efficiency and conservation in the use of energy and to ensure adequate, environment-compatible, distributed, and reliable energy supply;

WHEREAS, on 22 December 2008, the DOE issued Department Circular No. DC2008-12-0012 stating that it is the policy of the government to promote an investment and public environment for awarding any geothermal and petroleum service operating contracts;

WHEREAS, the DOE deems it proper to adopt effective strategies for promoting and attracting foreign and local investments to further develop the exploration, development and production of prospective new geothermal and petroleum areas;

WHEREAS, the DOE believes it is necessary for the need to continue ensuring a transparent and competitive system for awarding service/operating contracts for geothermal and petroleum exploration and production of the country's geothermal and petroleum resources;

WHEREAS, consistent with national interest, the DOE has, after consultation with stakeholders, received the endorsement of the Philippine Council for Investment and public comments for awarding any geothermal and petroleum service operating contracts;

WHEREAS, the DOE deems it proper that the most effective strategy for promoting and attracting foreign and local investments to further develop the exploration, development and production of prospective new geothermal and petroleum areas;

WHEREAS, the DOE believes it is necessary for the need to continue ensuring a transparent and competitive system for awarding service/operating contracts for geothermal and petroleum exploration and production of the country's geothermal and petroleum resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the above-mentioned premises, the following circulars is hereby issued governing the transparent and competitive system of awarding service contracts for coal, geothermal and petroleum exploration, development and production:

I. **Contracting Boards**

1.1. The Energy Resource Development Bureau (ERDB) shall determine prospective coal, or geothermal, or petroleum areas found in the Philippine territory, and its maritime zones requiring the participation shall be included in the competitive public contracting. The ERDB shall also be responsible for the conduct of the pre-qualification and bidding process, and shall have the power to accept, reject any or all bids and/or to declare a failure of bidding, and/or cancel such entire bids for competitive public contracting round. The DOE shall not accept any application or proposal for exploration, development and production of coal, geothermal and petroleum resources during the competitive public contracting rounds. No application for coal, geothermal and petroleum service contract shall be accepted or processed if it is not announced under the competitive public contracting rounds. The application for coal, geothermal and petroleum service contracts shall be accepted only during the competitive public contracting rounds. No application for coal, geothermal and petroleum service contracts shall be accepted or processed if it is not announced under

Across the NATION

Coal facility faces closure for pollution

By Hector P. Bergado
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources in Western Visayas has recommended the issuance of a cease-and-desist order (CDO) on the coal washing plant of Semirara Mining Corp. (SMC) for allegedly polluting Semirara Island's waters and mangroves.

In a memorandum issued by its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), the DENR cited "prima facie evidence" against the company on the "disposal of coal slurried coal tailings into the Sapa Creek and to the sea."

The memorandum, dated Feb. 11 and issued by Bienvenido Lipayon, regional director of the DENR-EMB, to the PAB, stemmed from a complaint lodged by fishmen residents.

It recommended that the company institute immediate and long-term measures to prevent the problem from reoccurring.

Residents at Sitio Baga in Alegria, one of the three villages of the island, had earlier complained that coastal resources, including mangroves, had died or had been contaminated by waste coming from the coal washing plant.

Semirara is one of the nine islands comprising Caluya town in Antique in northern Panay Island. It is considered one of the richest fishing grounds in the area.

The complainants said that silt has covered their coastline and mangroves as waste coming from the plant goes directly to the sea. Its siltation pond has been operational for a long time, they said.

SMC, which has been operating one of the biggest coal mines in Asia on the 9,300-hectare island, has reportedly denied that its siltation pond was not working.

It said the siltation was caused by several typhoons that had caused runoffs from old coal blending stockpiles.

The company also said it has implemented corrective measures, including the construction of a wall along the stockpile to prevent its erosion toward the shoreline. Its tailings pond has undergone maintenance and improvement to contain waste from the coal washing plant, it said.

But the EMB said the discharge of coal materials from the stockpile and tailings from the plant violated Section 27 of the Clean Water Act (Republic Act No. 9275), which prohibits the discharging or motorized into water bodies that could cause pollution or obstruct the natural flow of water.

"The respondent (SMC) failed to provide the necessary barriers to containment to prevent the coal blending stockpile from being washout by runoff to the receiving water body and likewise upsetting improperly the tailings pond serving the coal washing plant thereby discharging black silt materials to the water body," Lipayon said in his memorandum.

The EMB recommended a fine of P45,000 against SMC for violating three conditions of its environmental certificate of compliance.

It said a study should be conducted to determine the extent of damage and deterioration of seagrasses and aquatic resources, as well as an inventory and rehabilitation of mangroves.

The Iloilo Fisher Monitoring Teams headed by the DENR will hold a meeting and field investigation in Semirara on April 16-18 to further check on the allegations.

Environmental groups and residents will conduct a parallel probe.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ KIDAPAWAN CITY

3 PDEA agents killed

THREE agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) were killed when members of a drug syndicate they were after allegedly ambushed them in Barrio Olympog in this city on Monday.

SPO4 Dats Pons Tabuso, chief investigator of the four-man police team that was supposed to conduct a raid on Monday, Maundy Thursday, when they were ambushed.

Another PDEA agent was wounded in the 15-minute shootout.

Tabuso refused to give the names of the fatalities, saying the police did not yet inform their families about their deaths.

Carla Agustin, Inquirer Mindanao

■ BACOLOD CITY

Bus mishap hurts 50

FIFTY people were injured when their bus fell on its side early Monday in Binalbagan, a town in Negros Occidental on Holy Thursday.

The accident occurred in Brgy. Nandoy, and Binalbagan Police Chief Insp. Elias Sustiguen Jr. probe spokesperson said.

Senior Police Officer III Rodolfo Lastimoso, police investigator, said 15 others had earlier sought further treatment.

Lastimoso said the driver, Jose Ferrer, 40, of Brgy. Nandoy, Binalbagan, was charged with reckless imprudence resulting in multiple physical injuries and damage to property.

Ferrer was driving the bus when it fell on its side at around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, Lastimoso said.

Ferrer was driving the bus when it fell on its side at around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, Lastimoso said.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

500 toy guns seized

PO1 JOE confiscated about 500 toy guns from students in Negros Occidental on Holy Thursday.

The raids were conducted in Brgy. Nandoy and Binalbagan town, and Pamplona, La Carlota, Hinigaran and Binalbagan municipalities, Ilion Station commander Lt. Col. Rodolfo Lastimoso, police spokesperson said.

Senior Police Officer III Rodolfo Lastimoso, police investigator, said 15 others had earlier sought further treatment.

Senior Police Officer III Rodolfo Lastimoso, police investigator, said 15 others had earlier sought further treatment.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

■ TACLOBAN CITY

GMA to open parts

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will grace the opening of her 3rd consul office in Leyte and Samar on April 16 as scheduled despite the deaths of 64 persons early in April when a helicopter crash in Eastern Samar.

No part of the road in Palo, the port in San Ricardo, Southern Leyte, and in Kawayan, Biliran and Liloan towns in Biliran are accorded to call based there and confirm and boost the region's tourism.

"While [she] has to pause for a moment, the Presidential is more people to be scheduled," her spokesperson for Eastern Visayas, Cynthia Hamor, said by phone yesterday.

The Biliran port will remain shorter [since] for people bound for Bantayan Ferry and Leyte, while the Southern Leyte port will not travel time for those going to Biliran, Hamor said.

Jody A. Baldivia, Inquirer Visayas

BEACH THERAPY
A dip to ease the strain of the hot summer was in the cause of the body of water in Davao City

Nursing students urge CHEd probe of exam

LUCENA CITY—SEVENTEEN senior nursing students of Saint Anne College Lucena will not be joining next week's commencement exercises after failing to pass the school's "revalidation" test in one of their subjects.

Three of them have asked the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) to investigate their non-inclusion, which, they said, was the result of an "arbitrary, faulty and unscientific grading system."

The complainants, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal from school authorities, said their peers started after the school's review center conducted a surprise "revalidation" test on Nursing Care Management among the graduating students. More than 50 students flunked, making them ineligible for graduation.

Protest

Fourteen parents resorted to a broadcast dzRM late last month to air their protest, forcing the school to nullify the exam, the complainants said.

But 17 students were told that they still needed to be graduating because they supposedly failed to pass the subject based on the new grading computation of the college auditor.

"We were informed by our teachers that the auditor's office had all asked for our grades which they eventually submitted. When we asked for copies, our teachers couldn't give us any and we were just told to talk to the auditor's office. It puzzled us," said one of the complainants on Sunday.

The student claimed that the auditor's office "couldn't tell us anything to enlighten us."

"We all passed our regular exam and it was recorded in our teacher's record. How come that after the auditor's computation, we all suddenly failed? But they couldn't show us how they arrived at the computation. We demand transparency," he said.

He added: "Our parents had already spent considerable amount of money for our education, feeling as graduates is the best gift that we can give them in return. Our school should not deprive us of this opportunity based on dubious circumstances. If we really failed in that subject, we will accept it. But the school should explain it to us clearly."

On Monday, the students called up the school's dean to get an evaluation, but the phone operator said the concerned official was off duty.

School officials also refused to be interviewed by local reporters when the scandal broke out last month. Delfin F. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

81 of 86 colleges in Ilocos won't hike tuition

BAGUIO CITY—EXCEPT FOR five, colleges and universities in the Ilocos region will not be increasing tuition this school year, a Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) official said on Monday.

Evelyn Fuertes, CHEd regional director, said 13 schools had earlier sought tuition increases, "but [they] withdrew their requests after we appealed to them [not to proceed] because of the economic hardship."

The schools that pursued tuition increases are the University of Pangasinan in Dagupan City, Perpetual University in Mabalacat, Ilocos Sur Colleges and Northwestern University in Laoag City, and Saint Louis College in San Fernando City. The region has 86 colleges and universities.

The increases average about 5 percent. Twenty percent of the tuition goes to school facilities, 70 percent to salaries of teachers and personnel, and the remaining 10 percent to the school management.

"Perhaps, they used the tuition increase to upgrade their facilities," said Fuertes, who was briefed on the 2008 nonimplementation exercises of the Pangasinan State University here on Monday.

In previous years, she said, 20 to 30 schools would ask for increases. Last year, 24 schools increased tuition by 5% to 12 percent.

But Ilocos noted that enrollment in the region did not drop despite the economic crisis. She did not cite figures.

"The best good schools have so students do not go out of the region to study," she said. Deborah Sotelo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Sea cucumber kills fisherman, downs 6 others

CEBU CITY—A FISHERMAN died, while his wife and two sons, and three others were hospitalized after eating sea cucumber locally known as "donsol" and "bulao" shells for dinner in Lapu-Lapu City on Saturday.

SPO2 Rolito Gamo-o, chief investigator of the Lapu-Lapu police's homicide section, identified the fatality as Alexander Gallo, 51, of Sitio Seong, Marcos, Lapu-Lapu City.

Alexander's wife Lilia and two sons, Nemesio, 21, and Clarence, 20, neighbors Rosalina Rendon, 51, and Rendon's daughter Nenggie, 10, were brought to Mactan Island Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City.

Junior-on said that when Gallo and his sons arrived home from fishing, they fried the sea cucumber and prepared the seashell soup, which the family ate for dinner. They also gave some of the food to the Rendon sisters.

The next morning, all of them were vomiting and complained of stomachache and difficulty in breathing.

Gallo died in the hospital at 4:15 p.m. that day.

Police have yet to determine the cause of the poisoning, its source said.

He said the Bureau of Food and Drugs was still examining sea cucumbers and shells found at Mactan Island. Norman Nicpon, Inquirer Visayas

Coco farmers reeling from global crisis

DAGOHOY CITY—MORE than ten years of coconut farming in Barangay Dagohoy in Tubigon, Bohol, Eighty percent of the town's population of 1,574 depend on copra for their livelihood.

Rodrigo Vitaya, who has 300,000 coconut farmers, is beginning to feel the effects of the economic downturn. Copra exports have slowed down and prices have dipped from P42 a kilo to P15.

"We are dependent on the international market. Whenever demand from the international market slows down, our production is affected. In the process, the price also declines," said Vitaya, one of the biggest copra businessmen here.

Eighty percent of the region's coconut production goes to other countries, and the remaining volume is consumed by local oil mills. Last year, 1,156,266 metric tons of copra were exported, earning some P289.3 million.

Oton, a former mayor, expressed hope that prices would improve before the end of the year.

Copra price started to decline in February, according to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA). A PCA official estimates that the region's copra export has declined by as much as seven percent.

The agency has encouraged the farmers to plant other crops by providing them seedlings and fertilizers. Jody A. Baldivia, Inquirer Visayas

WATER BEARERS
Children bring water from one place to another in Barangay Potatan, Pililla province in Rizal province. RENE ESTANISLAO

Gov't mounts first show of force

From page A1

minister's office in Bangkok, the mobs protest site where thousands of protesters have been camped since March 26.

Fresh clashes could be heard and clouds of tear gas spread around the area.

Defying state of emergency

After some 12 hours of scattered clashes, all but some small groups of protesters were exhibiting to the area around the prime minister's office.

"We must gather in one place. Return to Government House or we may be at a disadvantage," taunted one of the protest leaders in the embattled enclave.

The demonstrations are defying the suspension of Abhisit's ruling Democrat Party and government came to power illegally.

Earlier, the protesters were motivated at a half-dozen points in Bangkok, defying a state of emergency that bans gatherings of more than five people.

Prime Minister Chief Jran Inegkhiri Juggrakrom said on nationwide television that soldiers would use "every measures and the chaos" but employ weapons only to self-defense and not "excessively."

Troops first moved before dawn to secure Bangkok's busy Din Daeng intersection, with soldiers firing hundreds of rounds into the air after protesters pelted them with rocks and Molotov cocktails, AFP reporters said.

Black bullets

"The shots fired into the crowd were blank bullets. The bullets are made of paper, so it only causes sound. No one threw when protesters found tortured soldiers to push them back. Those fired into the air are real bullets," said Army spokesman Col. Sunsern Kaewkamnerd.

A separate military official confirmed that the troops had moved in, saying that the aim was to "restrain protesters in one single spot and pursue more protesters from going in."

He said there were now up to 4,000 protesters in front of Government House.

In a televised address on Monday, Abhisit accused the red-shirted supporters of ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra of instigating violence and warned peaceful demonstrators calling for his resignation to disperse.

Biggest crisis

Thailand has endured years of political turmoil but this is the biggest crisis that Abhisit has faced since he came to power in December, following a controversial court ruling that drove Thaksin's allies out of office.

It is the first time the army has taken action since Abhisit ordered tanks and soldiers onto the streets of Bangkok in October. The military refused to enforce emergency decrees by previous pro-Thaksin governments last year.

Abhisit said 75 people were wounded, 23 of them soldiers, but rejected claims on a pro-protest radio station that four demonstrators were killed. Police later said another four were hurt and that there were 19 gunshot wounds treated.

The clash erupted just minutes away from shopping malls where tourists who had come to Bangkok for the Thai New Year festival were faced with closed signs.

Storm in Bangkok!

"You can't see where the fire often is going. It's pretty scary and I have two little ones with me," said 33-year-old Filipina tourist Sharon Pangilinan.

At the nearby Century Park Hotel, foreign tourists were seen rushing into taxis and heading for Bangkok's international airport. But others seemed unruffled.

"We've lost both nights, but don't worry me," said Noelle Jones, a tourist from Johannesburg.

Travel advisories

France, Britain, Australia, the United States, South Korea and the Philippines issued warnings to their nationals against traveling to Thailand and for those already in Bangkok to stay in their hotels and away from protests.

The government said it would move to protect Airport and power, while soldiers were deployed at train stations and at strategic locations including the electricity authority.

The prime minister remains under intense pressure to crack the unrest after the red-shirted protesters stormed the venue of the Asean summit last Saturday, forcing it to be canceled and leaving hundreds of delegates cut—some by helicopter.

The trouble moved to Bangkok last Sunday where demonstrators attacked a convoy carrying Abhisit out of the interior ministry. The motorcade of Abhisit—who, before Prayuth, was dragged from his car and beaten, suffering head injuries and his face slit.

Thaksin calls for revolution

Demonstrations also reported. In upcoal to northeast Thailand, Thaksin's stronghold, where he is popular among the rural poor. In provincial football by the Bangkok-based power centers of the Bohor, military and bureaucracy.

He is living in exile, much of the time in Dubai, to avoid a jail term for corruption but has addressed supporters by video or phone-in from exile.

On Sunday night, Thaksin called for a revolution and said he might return from exile to lead it.

Who's in charge?

The fruitless efforts to keep the peace are inspiring Thais to wonder who is in charge.

The violence unfortunately became obvious Saturday when a huge force of soldiers and police made only a feeble effort to stop unarmed protesters from breaking into the Bohon meeting, bringing proceedings to a halt and forcing the foreign leaders to flee by helicopter and boat.

"It is unclear whether [already] severely frail] was due to a broken chain of command, divisions within the Thai military, or a control willingness to risk national humiliation in order to keep a protest in check, closer land on the red shirts," said Michael Montesano, a visiting research fellow at Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

The situation deteriorated Sunday after Abhisit declared a state of emergency for Bangkok and surrounding areas. The government mobilized Abhisit's car just minutes after his motorcade disbanded.

-AFP-AP

'JoCap' son of Huk chief, first communist party founder

From page A1

high-impact coverage that included the December 1989 coup attempt, the August 2003 mutiny, the Manny Pacquiao decision and the Sanit Ko rebel soldiers who managed to stage two uncoded rebellions, one to oust the then-president and the other against communist insurgents on one front and against Moro secessionists on another.

At Boni Cal, who had served in the DPC vice president, recalled in a tribute on Sunday night on the night he chaired Senate in Quezon City: "There's conflict among comrades, and odds were 10 members, the DPC was difficult to manage. But JoCap, he kept the group together despite the revolutionary disputes, the demands of our ideals, despite the politics."

'Comforting presence'

It helped that JoCap was older than most of us at the DPC then. He left the competition to us, who were in our 30s and early 30s.

And when the skirmishes really had subsided, JoCap would be there—"a reassuring, comforting presence"—with an unspoken message: Let's drink, have fun, there's life after every two.

That may have be fostered the DPC's unique esprit de corps of brotherhood. "It's just a group, nothing personal.

In fact, he was always the first to congratulate any expert who got the scoop.

Like our other newsmen, JoCap smoked, drank and, when ever he could, grabbed a microphone and sang. "Mister Lito," "Kid of this," and "My Way"—were part of his repertoire.

He was also always compiling of pain in his knees. "Old age," he would say, beaming with pride.

In June, his age was a badge of honor, and he seemed in age gracefully, or perhaps just took quietly in history.

Child of history

In fact, the man was a child of history.

He was born on July 1, 1939, in a mountain redoubt of the Sierra Madre in Lubao in Bayan (Huk) in Pasay, Laguna. His father, Guillermo Capadocia, was a Huk leader during World War II and one of the hundred and thirteen secretary general of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP).

His mother, Lucia, became a leader in the 1930s when he joined Gilberto Evangelista in establishing the PKP, which opposed the US colonial government.

In 1932, the PKP organized the Huk as its military arm against the Japanese occupation.

As a child growing up in a forested Huk camp, JoCap adapted to his environment, according to his sister, Jessie Sandiner Tiglao, documentary Gino Valgado.

"He was good at maintaining hard rounds," Tiglao said, recalling her brother's stories since last he other.

Rebelling Huks who got lost in the forest could always rely on the young JoCap to lead them back to camp, Tiglao said.

In the late 1940s, Guillermo Capadocia was sent to Antipolo, his hometown, to lead the Huks on Pinay Island. (The family was left behind in Manila, according to Tiglao.)

In September 1952, he was killed in a fire fight with government troops led by Maj. Alfredo Santos, who would later become armed forces chief of staff, defense secretary and presidential candidate during the martial law years.

JoCap's mother rallied about his father—until 1992, when it became clear that the Senate would not renew the treaty that allowed the US government to maintain military bases in the Philippines.

"Had your father's revolution won, we wouldn't have this problem with the US now," Jo-Cap recalled.

She replied with a big grin.

Burial tomorrow

JoCap's remains will be buried tomorrow at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

He left behind his wife of 44 years, Mimi Sapinoso, children Ria and Joe Jr. and their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

PAF probe crash

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) has begun an inquiry into the helicopter crash that killed JoCap, Undersecretary Marilou Pacaraan, Brig. Gen. Carlos Cruz, Presidential Management Staff Assistant Director Pedrito Bandalaysang, pilot Maj. Rolando Sarmiento, co-pilot Capt. Alvin Alegarra, Quarter Master 2nd Class Oscar Reyes, and crewman Spc. Ron Rom Perez.

In a phone interview, PAF public information officer Gerardo Gumalin Jr. said the investigation would be led by Col. Manuel Morales, Air Force Inspector Office.

The PAF incident investigation Board will determine why the Bell 412 helicopter crashed less than an hour after taking off from Lubao Airport in Pampanga City at 4 p.m.

"The board is not time-bound but it will finish the investigation soon," Gumalin said.

He said parts of the chopper gathered from the crash site in a forested area at the boundaries of Bulacan and Benguet had been brought to the PAF headquarters at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City for initial examination. With reports from Jeremy Sarmiento

A letter to 'Tata Joe'

I will remember the way you walked carefully because you had difficulty keeping your balance while negotiating raised ground or a slight of stairs.

I remember being moved with awe because I thought you were fragile or helpless. But because I liked being with you. You made the ground thing for a grandfather figure in my life.

I remember you once grasped my arm in what I deemed to be the wrong place in one public social engagement. I was ready to protest that hand to its dark secret but it was crazy.

Big hug

I don't remember if it was one hugged. I wish I had tried, just once, to give you a big one. It only to show you how I felt now.

I believe you can hear my thoughts wherever you may be, that you can understand my regret for not having said the things we could have said to each other.

If I true. We should reveal the important things in our hand to the people we love for and thank those write they are still around to appreciate it.

Goodbye, Tata Joe. Watch over us. And pick out your pop when we really need it.

Brangelina want Pinoy baby, reports UK paper

From page A1

tentions of adding to her nine-brood family."

It would have been the couple's seventh child.

The Daily Mail said that Pitt, 45, was with Jolie, 33, when their chartered plane landed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on March 30 to avoid the ash from the first week of April. The couple returned to their Malawi on April 6.

"They want to add to their family and tried to adopt from Burma, but the authorities [there] are very strict, so they decided to look at the Philippines," the tabloid said, quoting an unidentified source.

Brangelina not here

Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) general manager Alfonso Cusi said he had not heard reports that Jolie and Pitt were in the country last week.

"I have checked with all my officers, including the VIP Lounge, as well as with the Bureau of Immigration. Sorry to disappoint the fans, but they [Jolie and Pitt] did not arrive [in the Philippines at all," Cusi told the Inquirer over the phone.

He said that he personally checked Immigration's manifest database and found out that the couple never arrived in the Philippines in any airport or seaport.

Security risks

It would be "impossible" for a highprofile couple like Jolie and Pitt to enter the country without security risks, Cusi said. "[They would have to coordinate] with us because there are numbers such as security procedures for such a visit."

He said it would also be "difficult" for Jolie and Pitt to come to the Philippines under assumed names, "because whether you like it or not, they would immediately be recognized by immigration officers."

Bihe assistant general manager for airport development and corporate affairs Tito Sarmiento earlier said by text that he had received records of private jets, signaling their immigration, customs police and bliss employees assigned to private hangars were not sure exactly who landed the Pitt-to-Jolie.

No inquiry, no application

The government's Inter-Country Adoption Board (ICAB) said it had yet to receive an inquiry or an application from the Jolie-Pitt couple to adopt a Filipino baby.

ICAB is the executive agency of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Penny Ellis of the DSWD public information office also told the Inquirer by phone that her office "has no knowledge" if Jolie and Pitt had made inquiries about adopting a Filipino baby.

An ICAB official told the Inquirer in a phone interview that adoptions be prospective foreign parents "never made" through a government agency to their home countries or non-governmental organizations accredited by ICAB.

The official, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to talk with the media, said that all prospective parents, Hollywood celebrities included, would have to go through the procedures set by the Philippine Domestic and Inter-Country Adoption Law.

Reasons for adoption

The ICAB official also said among the important factors taken into consideration in the prospective parents' "motives for adoption."

"We are looking for the best family for the child and not the other way around," the official said.

Some 300 Filipino children had been adopted by foreign parents in 2008, an increase from previous years, due to a number of countries had closed down their adoption programs.

However, placement of Filipino children to foreign families was a "last resort" as the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption puts preference on the adoption of children in their own country of origin, said the ICAB official.

In any case, Brangelina would check out the ICAB's website (www.icab.ph.gov.ph) if they are truly interested in adopting a Filipino baby as their seventh child.

Lucky 7

Pitt and Jolie, Hollywood celebrities known by their last name-in-one week, have six children, all born in different parts of the globe.

The twins, Maddox, a year-old adopted Cambodian boy, and Zahara, a six-month-old Ethiopian girl, were legally adopted by Jolie in 2002 and 2005, respectively.

In 2006, Jolie gave birth to Shiloh, her firstborn daughter by Pitt, by in-vitro fertilization in Namibia.

In 2007, Jolie adopted one more child, three-year-old Rui from Vietnam. The one-year period of adoption was said to have been a direct result of Jolie's increased awareness on the plight of refugees worldwide, spurred by a trip in Cambodia twice—first while shooting the movie "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider," and then in 2001 when her capacity as Goodwill Ambassador of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In 2008, the Hit-Jolie tabloid-ending, dubbed Brangelina by the media, produced twins, again by coincidence, in addition to Pax Thien, a boy, and Vivienne, a girl.

Oracle out to continue Harbour streak, duels Licealiz

By Jasmine W. Payo

TOUGHIES TRADE GUARD IN THE 'HOW' of Oracle when it kicks off its drive for a seventh straight championship today in the PBL PCCI Mid-Unity Cup.

"[Oracle] has dominated the league in the last six conferences, but I believe that the other teams have equal opportunity to win," league commissioner Chino Trinidad said in a press conference yesterday at Carey's Grill in Libis, Quezon City.

"With the season smoothing, there is a correction. The best will win every discriminator during the five teams."

Oracle, formerly Air Asia Unity, opens its campaign against formerly Hapee Toothpaste, at 4 p.m., right after Magnolia Pharmaceuticals and Pharex collide at 2 at the San Juan gym, behind the Sun Sun city hall.

Cebu, formerly Bacchus, completes the five-team tournament after both Tuscon Oils and Burger King filed a leave of absence from the league.

"All the teams are so balanced that anybody has a competitive edge," said league chair and Harbour owner Mike Fermin.

Several teams also have to deal with the absence of key players, who are training with the Smart Gilas Philippine development team in Serbia.

Nino Chavez who said Oracle's come-a-stay Tourdable runs without national player Mark Barroca, last conference's MVP Allen Mikaelle Rivero.

"We have six new players from the disposal draft," she's lined it Mantzaroke said. "Well, still be fighting. This conference, it depends on which team is more consistent on defense and offense."

Two foreign departees will cross the sidelines with Elena Caparas calling the shots for Oracle and Egla Mocanaya for Licealiz.

Pacman splurges on darts tilt

THOUGH GENE BOLT WITH HIS training for Becky Barnes, Manny Pacquiao still finds time for tilting.

Pacquiao, trying to hone his dart skills after getting beat by Barnes in London last month, is backing the upcoming $50,000 Fantasma Open/Steel Tip Dart Tournament at the Wilshire Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles.

According to Doug Swanson of Philthrowing, the five-day event lured some 200 players, including noted Americans Darren Young, Chris White, Robert Hedgecock and Jerry Bartlett. They will be challenged by top Filipino bets Mico Espedon, who topped the eight-ball, Dave Salvacion and event organizer Filoca Facunes.

Also in the planning stages is a tournament in Asia and a $60,000 event during Pacquiao's birthday bash in December. — Ray Lanton

Bacolod-West batters post twin victories

By Cedell P. Tipon

PERENNIAL WORLD SERIES CAMPAIGNERS Bacolod-West swept in two assignments yesterday at the start of the Senior League softball tournament of the Philippine Series in Manila.

Powered by top players who have part of the Asia-Pacific Team that finished fourth in last year's Senior League World Series, the Bacolod dynamo smoked Pasig, 15-0, and International Little League Association of Manila (Ilama), 14-1, at the Ilama Memorial Stadium.

Chris Pelino Martin's grand slam home run in spark a nine-run opening inning and Bacolod-West hurler Constantino Apolo Tiro retain clutch top six batters and hit a solo homer in the fourth to spur every Ilama.

PAL's half of the Manila squad that finished second in last year's World Series already ineligible. Manila still installed itself as the favorite to big League softball with victories over Bacolod East (16-0) and Cabuyao (14-1).

Defending Senior League Central Luzon champion Imelda Valley Marikina also opened its campaign in style by defeating Mandaluyong, 9-6, while Tanauan overpowered Dumbuenga, 20-0, at the UST field.

Ilam routed Makati, 14-0, in Big League baseball, where Tanauan and Taguig battled Northern Samar and Camarines Norte, respectively.

In Little League baseball, Mandaluyong blanked Mt. Province, 6-0, and Cavite crushed Makati, 25-0, at the Loyola Ballfield.

Shakey's V-League officials, PP cyclists PSA Forum guests

THE COLORS OF THE SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE FEST and the spirit of the upcoming Philippine Cup will be showcased during the public sports program that starts at 9:30 a.m.

Among the six-to-seven-a-side fun one-day affair, Shakey's V-League Deputy Commissioner Ricky Palou, Executive Director Ricky Palou and Cocktail Bubble and mobile Thonyn Gervasio, Jim Alleluia, Ivan Valenzuela, Rainer Escano, Emmie Obogo, Renato Sandoval and beer manager Nic Rodriguez.

Martinez tops Tour's Stage 1

Rest of big guns wilt in searing heat

By Jane Navarro

THE HARD potatoes of cyclists tackles Kampuman drummer in Quezon City on the way to Lucena City. Stage One winner Ronan Martinez (front) took over with a celebrate at the end of the long-burning ride. AGW KYLE

LUCENA CITY—TOMAS MARTINEZ SHOT like a comet to the final 180 roadways to win the Liquigas-LPGMA Tour of Luzon's opening stage raced in the blistering summer heat and snatched the lead of wearing the yellow jersey for the first time in his professional career.

Martinez obtained just a solo Jeffrey Montan of Team Liquigas to outrun top honors in the 120-kilometer Dingat Clare to Quezon Provincial Capitol route.

The energy-sapping 52-degree heat separated Martinez and his two breakaway partners from the rest of the 90-cyclist field slowly reeling from a pair of Category 2 climbs in Lucban and Quezon provinces.

Montan, a member of the SF Trade team that managed to unwind Asian heat from 2004 to 2008, also put 7-Eleven/Road Bike Philippines on top of the team standings after the stage that was fired off at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

The 19-year-old Montan, who kept Martinez only had Celebrities of DPT Line on his tail during his 'Sweep, Road finished forward in 2:40:51.12 with Calabria third in 2:40:50.12.

Figure from the numbers, it's going to be really hot sweating the yellow jersey," said Martinez, an Air Force sergeant, in Filipino ahead of today's second stage from here to Tagaytay City. "I have to give my best to keep the lead."

The big guns, however, were nowhere with in striking distance at the start of this seven-day hilarious backed by Liquigas and the Liquified Petroleum Gas Manufacturers Association.

Filipino Tangalin, the Tour champion in 2004, finished inside the top 20 along with 2005 Tour winner Arnel Quilmatic of Happy Time and 2008 champion Danny Bonaventos of Mobile 168 riders.

Tangalin, skipper of Team Liquigas, arrived just three days before the Tour kickoff and couldn't shake off the cobwebs. He works for an IT company in Dubai.

Two-time Tour champion Wouter Jeremiah of Regency Group limped home in the fourth group with a time of 2:42:07.41.

Among the favorites, only Lloyd Lucien Reynante of Amerimax Thai managed to stay in touch with the early leaders, finishing fifth together with 7-Eleven/Road Bike Philippines skipper Sherwin Dimasoy in 2:42:20.05.

Sen. Chiz Escudero and Quezon City Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy graced the event. Quezon Governor Eduardo Jr. a brief opening ceremony before flagging off the race stage at 9 a.m.

Asian Challenge Cup: Pinoy booters face Bhutan

SEEDED 12TH BY FIFA FOR BEING RANKED 194 IN 2008, the Philippines opens its bid against Bhutan today in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers in the Maldives.

Goalkeeper Neil Etheridge, the only Filipino British citizen affiliated with a Premier League club, headed the squad that also includes 20-year-old Robert Gier, a 12-year veteran of the English leagues, who will make his debut with the national team in the four-team qualifying tournament.

"I think this is the best team that we have put together," said Philippine football president Mariano Araneta, who has been criticized for forming the team a month before the tournament.

The nationals will open the four-day event Group B against Maldives and Turkmenistan.

Save for Gier and collegiate standouts Aly Borromeo, Fausto Escalio and Jose Ahiera, the core of the national team is the pool four years has been kept by returning coach Aris Caslib.

The Filipinos are handed by coach Stefan Mutsiz, which finished 4th in the same tournament last year in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. They are counting all two international tournaments, where they missed out on qualification due to goal difference. — Cedell P. Tipon

Meteors, Niños start Liga Nat'l Finals series

GAGADAN DE SIGO CITY—TWO undefeated powerhouses collide as top-ranked Meteors Oriental Mindoro and defending champion Niños Ilocos Sur open their 2009 Liga Nat'l Filipinas Conference 31 National Finals series today.

Meteors and Cebu represent the best that regional football had to offer, said league president Nicolas Lim.

Game 1 of the best-of-five series unfolds at 5 p.m. in Gagayma de Oro City.

Meteors Star will host the Aleyandro, who topped the Quezon Red Others, 3-2, in the semifinals. The Riders, who swept the Tuscon-Laguna Stallions, 3-0, also in the semifinals, will host on Hilarion Rivera and Dioscar Garcia.

NCA derby fires off today

TOP GUNS OF THE NATIONAL Cockers Alliance battle veteran power participants, including the masters of hosting superstar Manny Pacquiao, in today's 8KG derby at the Fresno Center in Pasig City.

Derby is hosted by Rebel Ely and the Pacific group, the guests who are out to score an upset against MCA regulars star Ric de Guzman, Tata Sala and Sammy Up Magna Lim, Boy Velez and Johnny Johnson, Rey Hizon and Elbee Magsino, Albert Dalmeda, the Bacon gun and Cebu groups, Brandy Tolentino, Rodrigo Chino, Wilson Tang, Pedro Medina, Erning Montano of Bacon and Tagaytay Mayor Bonbol Tolentino.

The pamatubongan NCA core will be led by chair Wade Alfonso, Jimmy Ang, Ferdie Bacoordelo, Negros Occidental Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Bene Medina, Ric de Guzman, Blasto Villaseca, Paul Escobar, Jerry Banico, Bebot Villar and Intramuros Sweetie Bowrie Pryce.

Mark Wismeier C. Ilhagan

Peping at POC must get up and boogie

IF PEPING COJUANGCO STILL HAS A FEW lives left—despite his scary record as POC president—the handful of believers should muster no more and really succeed three months hence.

They also have to push him out of the presidency—quick.

Cojuangco, for his part, has got to get up and shake a leg.

* * *

For starters, the beleaguered Philippine Olympic Committee chief has not only become vicious-duck president.

Cojuangco, beloved brother of national heroine Cory Aquino, has visibly lost the respect of several sports leaders.

It's now easy to accuse Cojuangco of dodging in the cabaret.

The least he can do is jump up and boogie.

* * *

If in a blind, corrupt fourteen, Cojuangco could be accused of sponsoring anarchy.

By dragging his feet and refusing to act objectively on feuding leadership battles, Cojuangco has allowed Olympians to be treated right next to his husband.

He should've at least displayed a semblance of competence and courage by discouraging lawlessness in several national sports associations.

* * *

Several teams also have to deal with the absence of key players, who are training with the Smart Gilas Philippine development team in Serbia.

Nino Chavez who said Oracle's come-a-stay Tourdable runs without national player Mark Barroca, last conference's MVP Allen Mikaelle Rivero.

"We have six new players from the disposal draft," she's lined it Mantzaroke said. "Well, still be fighting. This conference, it depends on which team is more consistent on defense and offense."

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BARE EYE

Ricardo Brimualdo

The POC, by the way, suffered a big blooper following the flare-off yesterday of the multilingual Tour of Luzon.

There was nothing exactly wrong with the Tour, which obviously has well-meaning commercial backers.

But Cojuangco did SP sports a big disservice by refusing to lift a finger after Tour organizers hoodied by Tagaytay Mayor Abraham Tolentino, self-styled head of the Integrated Cycling Federation of the Philippines, announced that the race would serve as official tryout for members of the SF team to the Laos Southeast Asian Games.

* * *

That was a direct affront to Cojuangco.

For the record, it was only PSC chair Harry Angping who has genuinely honorary recognition as Palestino's group.

As manifested in an official communication, one of Angping's only acts was to seek a working relationship with Tolentino, whose the PSC chief wrongly called the right-ally elected national cycling association president.

The payment of sanctioning national sports resolutions affiliate lie solely in the POC, which is scheduled to hold a general assembly to-morrow.

* * *

Anyway, lawyer Samuel Edaiar reported yesterday that Tolentino has multiple claims with the International Cycling Union in seeking an imprimatur for the Tour.

Tolentino has told the UCI his election did not encounter any objections, a complete falsehood, Edaiar said.

Tolentino's election was actually a defiance of established rules, Edaiar maintained.

* * *

In refusing to act against troubles, Cojuangco has succeeded in fueling what many consider muffin's cooks of

Not only that. They've also likened the to effective tonic to a troubled dog.

He is either sinking or has totally lost direction.

As POC head, Cojuangco has obviously become SP sports' most flagrant black eye.

That, you bet, is worse than losing a boat race dummy.

Or can Peping still jump up and boogie?

Cabrera steals Masters, foils Perry ...

From page A14

total of 276, finishing level with Campbell (68) and Perry (71), who appeared to have the title within his grasp before bogeying 17 and 18.

Japan's Shingo Katayama (68) finished one of the last three holes to thrash fourth at 10 under, a stroke ahead of two-time champion Phil Mickelson who carded a final round nine to a record-equalling six under 30 on route to 67.

Third-ha. 1, and four-time winners Tiger Woods (68) had to settle for a share of sixth at right under after bogeying the last two holes.

Much of the interest was focused on the high-profile pairing of Mickelson and Woods as they crossed a huge gallery to a dunning chorus of cheering in less-scoring conditions.

The heavyweight duo began the day seven shots off the pace and Mickelson set the tone with a sizzling burst of six birdies in seven holes from the second.

Mickelson's charge was matched the Masters record set by Johnny Miller in the third round in 1975 and equalled by Greg Norman (final round, 1986) and Kenny Perry (second round, 2004).

The demon heightened when Mickelson double-bogeyed the par-three 12th after finishing the master of Rae's Creek with the tee.

Woods, who had covered the final nine in 33, finished 15, 15 and 16 where his tee shot ended four feet from the pin, to stay on track for a 15th major title.

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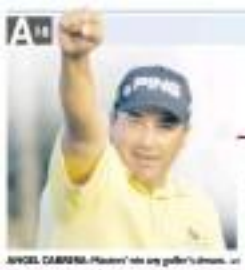

ANGEL CABRERA—Masters' title any golfer's dream. AP

Cabrera steals Masters

Foils Perry in playoff; Mickelson, Woods rallies fizzle out

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—ARGENTINA'S Angel Cabrera won his second major championship with a one-over-par playoff victory at the US Masters on Sunday, becoming the first South American to claim the prized Green Jacket.

The 2007 US Open champion edged out Australian Kenny Perry and Chad Campbell at Augusta National to be clinched his second four-title outside par at the second extra hole.

After hitting his approach to 12 feet at the 18th, the 35-year-old Cabrera calmly sunk putts to before raising his right arm in joy.

Perry, 48, battling to become golf's oldest major winner, overshot the green with his approach at the 10th and was unable to save par after chipping back 15 feet past the cup.

Campbell, like Perry seeking his first major win, dropped out when he bogeyed the first extra hole, the par-4 18th, from the fairway.

"This memories, and also Oakmont, are the happiest moments of my life," Cabrera said before being helped into his Green Jacket by 2008 champion Trevor Immelman.

"When I won the US Open, (competitor) Roberto de Vicenzo gave me a nice picture and there was a green jacket in it, making me go for it," added Cabrera through an interpreter.

De Vicenzo came close to Masters glory in 1968 only to submit an incorrect scorecard, giving American Bob Goalby a one-shot win.

Cabrera signed off with a 71 for a 12-under

CABRERA, A 15

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DID YOU KNOW

FLAGPOLES carrying the Philippine flag must not be as high as or higher than the Independence Flagpole at the Rizal Park which measures 107 feet.
—Ort L. Bonifacio, Inquirer Research

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DIVING BOARD
Children jump off the R-1 Bridge, using it as a diving board, as they plunge into the water to escape from the scorching heat in Sinuday Mountain, Tondo, Manila. —JAY ISRAEL PANGILINAN

Cops nab 6-year-old boy for stoning buses on SLEX

By Marlon Ramos

A 6-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS ARRESTED BY THE POLICE AND PERsonnel of the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) after he and three other kids threw stones at vehicles on the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) on Sunday night.

Aside from stalling traffic, the stone-throwing incident damaged five Manila-bound passenger buses and left a woman injured, Rodolfo Lidua, PNCC traffic operation, told the Inquirer yesterday.

According to Lidua, at around 7:45 p.m. Sunday, they received a report that a group of boys were throwing stones at passing vehicles near the Pansol Bridge in Barangay Palo, Calauan, Laguna.

Several PNCC watchmen and members of the Highway Patrol Group (HPG) of the Philippine National Police immediately went to the area and arrested the boy.

"The three other kids were able to evade the policemen and PNCC officers who rushed to the area," Lidua said over the phone.

CONTINUED A-10

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Suspended Rodriguez mayor refuses to leave office, goes to court

By DJ Yap and Ethan C. Tandoc Jr.

AN AIR OF UNCERTAINTY HUNG Tuesday over the town of Rodriguez, Rizal, following the suspension by the Sandiganbayan of Mayor Pedro Cuerpo who has holed up in his office and refused to accept the order.

On Monday, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) served the 90-day suspension order on Cuerpo who declared he would continue to act as mayor until the anti-graft court explicitly stated that its decision striking his appeal was "final and executory."

"This is again a form of confusion for our town," Cuerpo said in a phone interview moments after DILG officials left the town hall upon posting copies of the suspension order on the wall.

Several of his supporters had already camped out on the town hall grounds. Earlier, they formed barricades to prevent authorities from forcing Cuerpo out of his office.

Based on the suspension order, Cuerpo would be replaced by Vice Mayor Jesus Cruz but it was not immediately clear what he intended to do with the unwanted mayor.

Cuerpo said the DILG officials told him that they "requested" his decision to remain holed up in his office, and would make no moves to force him out "unless the vice mayor asked for it."

He added that he has been staying inside his office since Sunday evening, and that he has no intention of leaving until the Sandiganbayan has heard his several motions for reconsideration questioning its decision to prevent his suspension.

In the same vein, Cuerpo asked the court's Second Division to hold the hearing on his second motion on April 16 instead of on April 23 as earlier scheduled.

"In view of the DILG's attempt to enforce today the suspension order despite the pendency of aforesaid motion, there is an urgent need to hear the motion as soon as possible," he said in his petition which was filed at 1:02 p.m. yesterday.

In a ruling on March 17, the Second Division denied Cuerpo's first motion for reconsideration and affirmed its decision to place him and three other town officials under preventive suspension for 90 days on the strength of a complaint filed by several residents.

Cuerpo and the others are facing charges of grave abuse of authority and grave misconduct for the demolition of houses on a piece of land in Barangay Burgos in 2002.

In an Oct. 3, 2008 resolution, the Sandiganbayan's First Division granted a motion by the prosecution to suspend Cuerpo and the other accused "pendente lite," or while the case is pending.

Also ordered suspended were their current public positions were Rodriguez municipal engineer Fernando Romo; Salvador Mandoza, a barangay chief, and Renato Bayera, a police officer who Cuerpo said was killed in an ambush in 2004.

Terence Francisco, the lawyer of the 93-year-old Santillan, told the Inquirer that the suspension should be "automatic" since the first motion for reconsideration was dismissed.

"A second motion for reconsideration is a mere scrap of paper," he said.

SUSPENDED A-10

4 dead in Muntinlupa shooting incident

By Marlon Ramos

FOUR PEOPLE, INCLUDING a policeman, were killed while three others were injured in a shootout between the police and suspected hit men in Muntinlupa City on Easter Sunday.

PO3 Richard Segovia, case investigator, said PO2 Ramiro del Prado, who was assigned at the Police Community Precinct 2 of Muntinlupa, and businessman Santiago Martinez, 43, died as they were being taken to the Alabang Medical Center.

Segovia said two of the four armed men who shot dead Martinez were also killed in a gunfight with responding members of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team.

One of the slain gunmen was identified as Rong de Guzman.

Segovia said the injured were taken to a hospital where they remained confined at press time.

They were identified as Jacob Capistas, 36; John Levy Tinsman, 31; and Rolando Laguras, 25, residents in the area who were hit by stray bullets.

Segovia said Martinez, a local political organizer and a businessman, was standing near his house at 111 Winston St., Barangay Cupang at around 6 p.m. Sunday when four armed men shot him at close range several times.

He said Del Prado, who happened to be in the area, heard the gunshots and ran after the assailants.

"PO2 Del Prado caught up with the armed men but he was killed in the exchange of gunfire," Segovia added.

A SWAT team pursued the fleeing gunmen who were cornered in an alley and tried to escape by holding as one of the hostages in the area.

After a 30-minute gun battle, two of the gunmen were killed as their two cohorts escaped.

Senior Supt. Elmer Jamias, Muntinlupa police chief, said they have yet to determine the motive in the killing of Martinez.

"As far as we are concerned, the case is already closed," Jamias told the business editor@abs-cbn.com.

He said two .45 caliber pistols were recovered from the slain gunmen.

MetroBriefs

Birthday party in jail

A 28-YEAR-OLD mason in Manila spent his birthday in jail after he was arrested by policemen for slaughtering two dogs on Easter Sunday. Ernesto Galdez, a resident of Nuñez Street in Sta. Ana, was detained by operatives of the Manila Police District's Station 9 after a neighbor reported him to police. Galdez, who was celebrating his birthday, was also found guilty of violating Republic Act 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998. Galdez was detained at the Manila City Jail. — Jeannette I. Andrade

2 men robbed for theft

TWO MEN who broke into the house of actor William Martinez and stole expensive bags and shoes worth more than P500,000 were arrested by the police over the weekend. Supt. Oscar Palmes of the Quezon City Police District's Kamias police station said they have already filed robbery charges against Roland Almonera and Ramon Mata. Palmes said the two were arrested as they were making out of the house in Malabon. — Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

Police form task force to probe cop's death

By Alison W. Lopez

A TASK FORCE HAS FORMED by the Makati police and the Southern Police District to probe the death of a policeman in Makati City yesterday.

Senior Supt. Cedrick Tuzo, chief of the Makati police department, said "Task Force Lito" was created to "thoroughly investigate" the killing of SPO1 Cecilio Lito of the Highway Patrol Group.

"We will not let this incident just pass, especially since a police-man was killed. We will look at all angles," he told the business.

Lito was about to leave his house in Barangay Rizal, Pateros, Rizal, to go to work when he was shot by a still unidentified man at around 8:20 a.m. yesterday.

The policeman, who has been in the service for more than 18 years, died on the spot from five gunshot wounds.

Supt. Tomas Osia, head of the homicide division, said the gunman took the victim's service firearm before fleeing on a blue Honda motorcycle.

2 charged with driver's death

By Jeannette I. Andrade

CHINESE PROD FILES FILTER, day against two students for the death of a taxi driver whom they stabbed in a robbery attempt on March 23.

John Warren Lumabao, 20, and Ernesto Godio, 22, both students of the Philippine Maritime Institute-Colleges, were charged at the Manila Regional Trial Court with attempted robbery with homicide.

The charges were filed by Assistant City Prosecutor Wilnie Edad who recommended bail of P80,000 for each of the accused.

Based on the information submitted to the court, operatives of the Manila Police District's Ermita Station 5 arrested the two minutes after they tried to rob Munich taxi driver Benjamin Dilosto, 50, a resident of Cavite, Malabon City.

Before that, both men had flagged down the victim's taxi cab (TPE 458) at Plaza Sta. Cruz and asked him to take them to Malabon.

As the taxi reached Livaspang Bonifacio, the two pulled out knives and told the victim to give them his money.

The victim, however, tried to avoid every one of the knives and was stabbed in the abdomen.

Despite his wound, he managed to step on the brakes, jump from the taxi cab and ask bystanders for help.

At this point, the assailants alighted from the cab and ran.

The eyewitnesses assisted the victim to PGH Medical Center of the Pharo Laurence police station where the people who chased after them.

Pelaeon, on the other hand, was rushed to the Philippine General Hospital where he died.

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

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The archbishop and the voice of God

MANILA ARCHBISHOP FERNANDO CAPALLA has compared a prayer to stop the secretary executions in Davao City.

The prayer was meant to protect criminals who would only result in kill innocent citizens, and drug pushers and traffickers who would destroy the city's youth.

Archbishop, why didn't you also pray for the safety of residents and visitors of the city?

Why didn't you pray for the souls of the victims of merciless criminals and the youth whose lives were destroyed by drugs before the vigilantes came into the picture?

* * *

Yes pupuli, vox Dei. The voice of the people is the voice of God.

People in Davao City don't denounce the so-called Davao Death Squad because they are much safer now than they were before.

In the 1980s, Davao City was a "killing field" where robbers, policemen and military men were shot by unidentified men at random.

Before the coming of the vigilantes, even holy places in the city like the San Pedro Cathedral and a mosque were not spared by criminals.

The unlivebed and morgue were bombed, resulting in the death and wounding of many people.

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

The people of Davao City said, "Enough is enough" and the random killings of innocent citizens, policemen and military men stopped, and the incidence of robberies went down.

Capella should have consulted the faithful in his archdiocese before issuing that prayer embracing criminals and drug pushers.

It seems he's the only one praying.

* * *

The filing of graft charges against former Bukidnon Rep. J.R. Nereus Acosta and his mother, former Manila Mayor Lucy Nereus Acosta, was hailed by the province's civil society.

Acosta allegedly made use of his post here in financing organizations where his close relatives had financial interests.

Congressmen and senators should be made to account for their countrywide development funds (CDF).

A senator is given P200 million, and if he serves for two terms or 12 years, his CDF shall have amounted to P2.4 billion.

A representative is given P70 million per year, and with his three consecutive terms or nine years, his CDF amounts to P630 million.

The amounts of P2.4 billion for each senator and P630 million for each congressman are huge by any standard of the imagination.

* * *

Some congressmen are not content with just being incompetent.

They have to be ludicrous and hypocritical.

Take the case of a multidimensional that expresses "trust, integrity and honesty."

Alas, their behavior is the exact opposite.

A curious case involves one distributor who discovered a mixed affair between three top officers and the video messages to charges of their accounts.

Instead of addressing the blatant conflict of interest, guess what the multidimensional did when this was brought to the officers' attention?

They illegally terminated the distributor's contract, and threatened him so he would remain silent.

It's enough to make you spit in your coffee and throw it at their faces.

Actor files ₱25-M libel suit vs online journalists

By Alison W. Lopez

ACTOR RICHARD GUTIERREZ YESTERDAY filed a P25-million libel suit at the Makati City Prosecutor's Office against the staffers of a show biz web site for allegedly publishing a false report about him.

Based on his complaint, Gutierrez said Jose Magtipon, editor in chief of Philippine Entertainment Portal (PEP), "maliciously" reported on March 29 that he was involved in a fight with actor Michael Flores.

Also named as respondents in the five-page complaint were Karen Pagsolingan, PEP managing editor, and Ferdinand "Bong" Cardenas, staff writer.

Gutierrez claimed that Gutierrez and Flores exchanged heated words at the parking lot of Genesis Restaurant in Pasay City, where director Mark Reyes was celebrating his birthday.

The argument apparently led to a grappling incidents, and also supposedly involved actor Epy Quizon.

Although Magtipon later apologized for the story, Gutierrez said in television interviews that he was determined to file a case against him.

In his complaint, Gutierrez denied that he had fought in a heated argument with Flores during Reyes' birthday party.

"The above-quoted article is a complete fabrication and only a product of the respondents' imagination," he said.

He added that the story was "intended by malice" because the staff of PEP who knew him and his celebrity-family members, could have contacted him or his family to check the facts.

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Cops nab 6-year-old boy

From page B-17

The boy, he added, was brought to the PNCC office in Calamba before he was turned over to the local police.

Lidres said the seven-year-old was as big as a man's fist—loaded by the boys in the passing vehicles inside the windows of the buses.

Geraldin Gerbida, 21, who was on a Calaca-bound Jam Transport bus (TYP 789), suffered a cut on the head after one of the stones hit her.

She was taken to the San Jose Trauma Center in Calamba where she received treatment for her injury. She was later allowed to go home, Lidres said.

SPO3 Joaquin Mandigan, SPC investigator, said the boy admitted that he was among those who threw stones at the passing vehicles. He also admitted that he was a street child.

The boy, however, was turned over yesterday to his parents and barangay officials.

"We counsel the 6-year-against these because of their age," Mandigan said, referring to the boy and his companions.

He added that they would meet with the boys' parents and barangay officials in the area to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Lidres reported that traffic was heavy on a four-kilometer stretch of the northbound lane of SLEX on Tuesday night—from the Canlubang exit to Calamba City in 45 minutes. Traffic eased in Calbayog Street—a notorious choke that starts his by stones were hurled or pull over.

Christopher Bonito, a resident of Sta. Laguna, said the incident only showed that the PNCC and its contractor were unable to ensure the safety of people using the expressway.

Bonito, who is among the hundreds of motorists who were caught in the traffic jam.

Another Laguna resident, Harold Balaran, 33, also complained about the PNCC's failure to put up safety warning devices to remain parts of the expressway where road repairs were undertaken.

"The PNCC knew for a fact that people will be flocking in and from the provinces this Holy Week. They should have placed warning lights or reflector stickers in conspicuous areas to avoid accidents," Balaran said.

In a government agency, the PNCC should provide assistance for the people like us who use SLEX every day," he added.

Suspended mayor refuses to leave

From page A-17

sidewalks is a prohibited pleading. Unless he secures a temporary restraining order, the suspension order should be given effect," he said.

According to Francisco, Crespo demolished the houses "without any legal basis or court order" and without giving prior notice to the affected families.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, meanwhile, defended their enforcement of the suspension order on the mayor.

"We received an order from the Sandiganbayan which was extremely. In it the case got a stay order from the Sandigan and we got the order, obviously we will respect the order," Puno told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

This is the second time that Duterte has been ordered suspended. In March 2008, he was suspended by the Bicol provincial board for cutting the levees and trees in landfills being operated by his government. The suspension order was lifted by the Supreme Court in favor of his appeal at the Office of the President.

With Ervin S. Quiamanlon

Chinese bias for male babies creates 32-M gap

BEIJING—A HALF-MILLION OF more offspring has left China with 32 million more boys under the age of 20 than girls, swelling "an imminent generation of excess men," a study released on Friday said.

The first time 20 years, China will have increasingly more men than women of reproductive age, according to the paper, which was published online by the British Medical Journal. "Both... [illegible] ...boys in China exceeded births of girls by more than 1.1 million. There were 120 boys born for every 100 girls.

This disparity owes to surgeon than all any other country, they said—a finding, they wrote, that sets perhaps strong printing in light of China's one-child policy.

They attributed the imbalance almost entirely to couples' decisions to abort female fetuses.

The trend toward more male than female children intensified steadily after 1990, they said, as ultrasound tests and abortion became more available. "Sex-selective abortion accounts for almost all the excess males," the papers said.

The researchers, who used census data from a 2005 census, said the disparity was evident among children aged 1 to 4, a sign that the greatest imbalances among the adult population lie ahead. They also found more distortion in provinces that allow rural couples a second child if the first is a girl, or in cases of friendship.

Those couples were determined to ensure they had at least one son, the researchers noted. Among children born second, there were 1432 boys for 100 girls, the data showed.

The Chinese government is concerned "about the consequences of large numbers of excess men for social stability and security," the researchers said. But "although some imaginative and not-easy solutions have been suggested," they wrote, China will have to continue here for a generation to come.

They said enforcing the ban against sex-selective abortions could contribute the sex ratio to the future. AFP

China says its local arms are world-class

BEIJING—A GOVERNMENT-backed science group says many of China's homemade weapons systems are world-class, reflecting the defense industry's new confidence and underscoring its ambitions of becoming a major arms exporter.

Steady advances have produced a solid foundation for Chinese-made armored fighting vehicles, missile systems and other weaponry, according to a report by the government's China Association for Science and Technology.

"In some areas, Chinese weapons have either achieved or are very close to achieving international advanced standards," the report said, without giving details.

Long reliant on Russia for advanced military hardware, China has invested heavily in its domestic defense industry in recent years, satisfying its broadest needs such as the 1.4-ton fighter and 20-21 ton-class combat helicopter models. China already makes licensed versions of the Russian Su-27 fighter jet, but claims to have mastered the technology to make its own advanced aircraft.

Progress has been spurred by the steady growth of military spending—last year the budget jumped 17.6 percent to 417.6 billion yuan (61 billion)—and concerns about Taiwan's intentions. Across the Taiwan Strait and a handful of other nations in an international effort to crack down on the aggressive and sizes much of the spending has gone into upgrading weapons, airforces, training and hiring members for the 2.3 million-member People's Liberation Army.

As an arms exporter, China has long serviced customers in the developing world, including isolated dictatorships like Sudan and Zimbabwe, with missiles, cheap technology such as China's version of the Kalashnikov rifle and the JL-8 jet trainer developed jointly with Pakistan.

Advances in technology may allow it to expand that customer base at lower prices than double-technology sold by Russia, France, Britain or the EU.

China undertook sweeping reforms of the defense industry in the late 1990s to introduce competition and bump efficiency, but still releases little solid data about the size and scope of its arms production.

Some upgrading has often poorly trained and equipped PLA need to keep its equipment hidden from sight, leading to speculation by foreign military observers that its technical level was or low to somewhat excessive investment.

Such skepticism hasn't begun to change and several years have even an ever-growing degree of openness. Later this month, the Chinese Navy plans to host ships from the United States and a handful of other nations in an international fleet review to mark the 60th anniversary AP

SUMMER FROLIC
A boy rides his bike at sunset in a park in Bucharest, Romania, on April 12, a warm weekend in summer places around the globe when boys succumb to the urge for outdoor fun. +

Afghans say air strikes kill civilians

HAMAMDEI, AFGHANISTAN—AFGHAN OFficials and victims leveled fresh accusations against foreign troops on Monday, charging that air strikes killed 60 civilians in two separate of 14, including women and children.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) confirmed there was an "event" in the southwestern province of Helmand last Sunday, but could not immediately provide any details.

The air strikes hit civilian homes in Helmand's Bongwar district about 15 km northwest of the provincial capital Asmahind, district Gov. Zaheer Tomarzai told reporters.

"Among the civilians were two children, a woman and three men," he said.

Seven children, a woman and six men were wounded, all of them children, he said.

An AFP reporter saw a wounded 60-year-old woman, a 14-year-old boy and two men in hospital in Asmahind, where authorities said ambulances were on their way with more wounded.

"We were asleep and all of a sudden the roof collapsed," said 34-year-old Dilbahlab, who gave only one name.

"I don't remember anything, I got to know here that my father, my mother, my brother and my younger sister have all been killed and I am wounded."

The woman, named Shahida, said: "We were asleep and heard a strange noise and then the roof and walls collapsed.

"The people took me out of the rubble and then got asleep and then, I was told my people from my family were killed and wounded. I don't know who is dead, who is wounded and who is alive in my family."

Monday's clashes came four days after the US military admitted that troops under its command killed four civilians during a raid in the southern province of Helmand last week. AFP

Grisly sights at Australia's Museum of Human Disease

SYDNEY—SYDNEY'S MUSEUM of Human Disease has opened its doors to the public, allowing visitors to view a Pandora's box of plague, parasites and diseases in graphic detail.

Deliberately used in a museum for medical students at the University of New South Wales, the museum has more than 2,000 endemic parts on display, illustrating all manner of ailments affecting the human body.

Located in the hospital museum of the university campus in Sydney's leafy eastern suburbs, the museum is not a place for the squeamish.

A blackened smoker's lung sits opposite a cautionary shot of the tar of a healthy lung, while to one pregnant display case lies a mummified fetus' bifeted "gooty esthetic."

Nearby, two disembodied white thumbs are set against a dark background in an exhibit that looks like a macabre parody of the "thumbs up" gesture.

Some of the illnesses displayed would be unfamiliar to those without a medical background, such as a swollen goiter and a gangrenous foot affected by the impact of the blood-clotting condition Buerger's Disease.

Curator Robert Lansdown admits the museum is overbearing but says it is a powerful educational tool, allowing the public to see first-hand how lifestyle choices such as smoking and eating fatty foods can affect the body.

"You only have to read the history textbooks and see some of the statistics, and we don't think you can't see a smoker, or they even overweight," Lansdown said.

"People get a real appreciation of how others they come here.

"They often only think about how their skin changes because of the sunburn, they don't think about other organs, but over the course of someone's lifetime they change a lot.

"Your diet, drinking and exercise habits make a real difference, and that's what people cannot force."

Lansdown said the museum was careful to treat the displays with respect, bearing in mind that they were once part of living human beings and should not be used for morbid entertainment.

"It's obviously still extraordinary, confronting and graphic for people but it's done in a way that gives them the opportunity to learn," he said.

Visitors to the museum are given a set of headphones to attend to a device that allows them to access recordings of pathologists discussing the exhibits on display.

Lansdown, a high school science teacher before he took over the collection three years ago, said most of the visitors since the museum opened in the public a few weeks ago had been older people.

"It's perhaps because they've had more exposure to diseases and they may know somebody suffering from one of these conditions," he said.

"Although it's quite upsetting initially, they then can understand it better.

"For the general public, and also for pathologists and doctors, the best way to learn about these things is to see them."

He said one man recently came to who was suffering infections, an irreversible lung-scarring disease caused by exposure to asbestos dust.

While the man was familiar with the symptoms and causes of the disease, he simply wanted to see what was occurring inside his body, Lansdown said.

He said some visitors become queasy and the group of senior high school students who originally involved the guided tours of the museum ended with initial comments such as "gross" and "disgusting." AFP

Thousands of orangutans discovered in Indonesia

JAKARTA—A PREVIOUSLY UNknown population of rare orangutans has been discovered in the forests of Indonesian Borneo, raising hopes for the species' survival, conservationists said on Monday.

Up to 3,000 endangered Bornean orangutans are believed to be living in Gunung Palung mountains in East Kalimantan province after surveyors in December found 219 orangutan "nests," Nature Conservancy scientist Erik Meijaard said.

The nests, sleeping platforms made of branches and leaves constructed by the animals, then could be "several hundred to several thousand" orangutans living in the 2,500 square kilometer area, Meijaard said.

Nardiyono, who headed the survey team for the US-based conservation group, said the discovery will aid efforts to conserve the apes.

"We are delighted with the news discovery. We consider this an important discovery as we have identified a new area where the orangutans can be found," he said.

"We are already working with the local government as well as (the) community to turn it into a protected area for the orangutans."

The orangutans probably fled into the area to East Basin and Barito districts after massive burn in the Sebangau in 1997 and 1998, said Nardiyono.

Meijaard said the consequences found in the Kalimantan, being in a subspecies, known as Pongo pygmaeus morio, known for its darker brown-black hair.

There are an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 orangutans left in the wild, 90 percent of which live in Indonesia and 10 percent in Malaysia, according to The Nature Conservancy. AFP

MAHAMATI

'Dalit Queen' weaves magic on campaign trail

MAHAMAI, INDIA—AT THE HELIcopter-ravaged drama cloudbursts of a title of "untouchables" surged forward for a glimpse of their new champion—a stout 53-year-old woman billed as India's potential prime minister.

The woman smiled and offered a wide-handed wave, sending the crowd into raptures. They sang songs in her praise and raised their hands in the air, as if in deference to a goddess who has descended from the sky.

For is Mayawati, a daughter of "Dalits" or people formerly known as "untouchables," whose favorable status beyond politics as this general election is the hope of change for millions born into the poverty and wretchedness of the lowest rungs of the Hindu caste hierarchy.

"No one feels for you the way we feel for you," Mayawati told a weekend rally in this southern India town of Hindu gurus.

Hop something helps by helicopter ahead of a staggered general election beginning on Thursday. Mayawati is seeking to replicate across the country her stunning landslide victory in local polls in the northern Uttar Pradesh state in 2007.

A key swing state, Uttar Pradesh is the single largest source of seats in parliament and Mayawati is positioning herself as a vital ally to whichever party may need her to govern. She could even bargain to be India's first Dalit prime minister.

"Mayawati should be doubling her seats this time in the state which will allow her to leverage better as a coalition leader," political commentator Anil Verma said. Her party won 19 parliamentary seats from Uttar Pradesh in 2004.

Analysts say such a government may not likely to be stable or be able to bridge a yawning fiscal deficit and push financial reforms, including slashing subsidies and privatization.

Critics say Mayawati and her Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are siphoning off state funds to pay for personal indulgences, from expensive houses, jewellery to frenzied statues of herself.

At the rally in Varanasi to support of her candidate—a Muslim seen to pull on another changes—her stage was circled by four anti-establishment. Her supporters formed a human chain.

One of nine children, Mayawati managed to study law and become a teacher through a government quota scheme for Dalits before being sucked into the BSP's founder.

Since her election win in 2007, she has inaugurated one of India's biggest highway projects, spent millions on parks and statues, and installed what critics say is an unelected state wish.

She has already found profiles over her personal wealth.

But Mayawati, affectionately called "Behenji," is respected taken in as less than most of India's CVO and is known to care people she is trying to mobilize.

"If Dalits alone are not enough to rule Mayawati power.

Mayawati won the state election with an unlikely alliance of Dalits and the patently Brahmins, the cream of the caste system. She is now trying to replicate that alliance in other parts of India.

But corruption is the most serious criticism of Mayawati and for two years in power have spawned disillusionment among a section of the party complaining of no jobs or opportunities. Reuters

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Bueno

Sri Lanka forces begin 2-day ceasefire

COLOMBO—SRI LANKAN SECURITY FORCES began a two-day ceasefire on Monday, as the government called for the Tamil Tiger rebels to allow trapped civilians to flee the conflict zone.

The United Nations estimates that 100,000 people are packed into the small strip of coastline in the northeast due to the last remaining territory held by the rebel fighters, who have been pushed down to defeat.

Troops halted their offensive on the orders of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to mark the traditional Sinhala and Tamil New Year, military spokesperson Udaya Nanayakkara said.

"We are not conducting any offensive operations," Nanayakkara said. "We have not fired and we have not received any fire so far from the other side."

He said that frontline troops had not reported any civilians leaving the rebel-held area since the ceasefire began.

The Tigers, who are accused of holding the civilians hostage, have suffered months of battlefield setbacks that could finally end their campaign for an independent Tamil homeland after 25 years of violence.

Rajapaksa ordered the unilateral ceasefire after intense international pressure, including repeated calls from the United Nations and the US.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the halt in fighting but said it fell short of his expectations.

"This is less than the full humanitarian pause of several days I had pressed for, but it nevertheless a useful first step and an opportunity to move towards the peaceful and orderly end to the fighting now so badly needed," he said.

US officials also raised some of the camps for people occupying the fighting earlier this month warned that thousands of non-combatants could get killed or wounded as the military moves to finish off the Tiger rebels.

Some 2,800 civilians were killed during a two-month period earlier this year, according to UN figures which are disputed by Sri Lankan authorities.

The rebels endured major losses last week when at least 350 were killed in four days of fighting to defend a village which eventually fell to government forces, officials said.

Tamils around the world have stepped up protests demanding further international pressure on Colombo for a permanent end to the hostilities.

Hundreds of Tamil protesters staged a rally outside lawmakers Prime Minister Gordon Brown's official Sydney residence on Monday after some 100,000 demonstrators marched through central London.

In Norway, a group of Tamils stormed the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oslo on Sunday, smashing windows and furniture inside the building. AFP

EASTER AT JERUSALEM, WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Armenian priests celebrate Easter Sunday at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City on April 12. According to Christian tradition the church is built on the site where Jesus was crucified and buried. EPA

Obama beats first national security test

By Jennifer Loven

WASHINGTON—THE US ECONOMY is drowning only glimmers of life and two costly wars remain in the balance, but President Barack Obama's "no drama" handling of the Indian Ocean hostage crisis proved a big win for his administration in its first critical national security test.

Obama's quiet backstage decisions to authorize the Defense Department to take necessary action if Capt. Richard Phillips' life was in imminent danger gave a Navy commander the go-ahead to order snipers to fire on the pirates holding the cargo ship captain at gunpoint.

For Obama, the benefits were instantly clear: an American life saved and a major victory notched against an increasingly assertive scourge of the seas off the Horn of Africa.

Obama's handling of the crisis showed a president who was comfortable in relying on the US military much as his predecessor, George W. Bush, did.

But it also showed a new commander in chief who was willing to use all the tools at his disposal, bringing in federal law enforcement officials to handle the judicial elements of the crisis.

The vision appeared in stark contrast Obama's natural but determined handling of the incident. What won't be known for some time is whether Obama will benefit politically.

When Obama campaigned for reelection, he may take Bush's approach of turning any such incident into evidence of his leadership acumen. On the other hand, Obama didn't go before the cameras on Sunday to trumpet the success, instead issuing a written statement that saluted the bravery of the military and Phillips but claimed no credit for himself.

Also, this crisis, while tapping the same nerve, may fade to its distant memory by the time voters get a chance to take stock of the performance of Obama and his party.

Still, it goes some way toward dispelling the notion that a liberal Democrat with a known distaste for war—Obama campaigned on his opposition to the Iraq invasion—doesn't have the will to call on US military power.

The sniper operation on Sunday with greater guns aimed at Phillips, was a daring, high-stakes gamble, and it could have totally gone awry. If it had, the fallout would have probably landed hardest on Obama.

Indeed, the last Democratic president to unleash American military might against hostage-takers suffered miserably from the failure of that operation. Portrayed in the book and movie "Black Hawk Down," a US peacekeeping mission ordered by President Bill Clinton ended with a humiliating withdrawal of troops after a deadly clash in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

The outcome this time was vastly different.

Since the standoff began last Sunday, Obama made no public, in-person remarks on the topic, even declining to answer others questions over-focused on him during a press availability.

He didn't roll in his Cabinet for a high-profile command meeting, he let military and top administration officials do the talking, but even they kept safely confining out of the spotlight.

White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel said Obama's actions should not be interpreted to mean that he wasn't deeply involved. The president's public posture was calculated to not raise the temperature on the situation or give the hostage-takers anything to exploit.

"Let's not confuse a public role with being on top of the situation," Emanuel said. "If you'll interpreted yourself, you would make the discussions that were happening more difficult."

So what Obama did was receive regular briefings, sometimes as often as half a dozen times a day. He weighed in with two critical decisions: allowing the military to take action to save Phillips' life. And he laid the groundwork for a federal criminal law enforcement response.

While House officials said the Justice Department is already reviewing evidence to determine whether to file criminal charges against the captured Somali pirates. The US is treating the matter as a criminal case, because officials have heard no direct ties between Iran African pirates and terror groups. AP

UN Council to adopt statement on North Korea

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN Security Council was expected to adopt a formal statement on Monday, rebuking North Korea for its long-range rocket launch and calling for a tightening of existing sanctions against Pyongyang.

The non-binding draft was agreed on Saturday to defend close talks among the five permanent members of the council—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Japan and was later submitted to the 10 non-permanent council members.

Mexico's UN Ambassador Claude Heller, the council chair this month, told reporters that the nonpermanent text submitted by his 10 counterparts, Issues first, as an impromptu meeting of the 15-member body, "is an excellent basis for a consensual and clear message by the Security Council."

He said a new council meeting was scheduled for Monday afternoon "to approve the statement" that had been sought by Japan.

"What is important is that the Security Council acts in a very unified manner," he added. "I hope this goal will be achieved on Monday with a formal adoption of this draft."

Rice told reporters she hoped the Council would adopt the statement "in send a very clear message to North Korea that what they have done under the guise of a satellite launch is in fact a violation of their obligations and I dont that there are consequences for such action." AFP

Florida city's ban on 'saggy pants' spurs civil action

RIVIERA BEACH, FLA.—All fashion statements go, the young men's "saggy pants" look, with trousers slung low enough to reveal a generous swath of boxer shorts, has some lawmakers chuckles.

For one thing, to sass ever pendulously close to the ultimate wardrobe crisis for a man: a sudden drop of unbelted trousers to the ankles. That there is the legal issue. In this top healthcare town 70 miles north of Miami, the look is against the law.

Last year, more than 70 percent of voters here backed an ordinance making it illegal to wear trousers low enough to reveal skin or underwear.

Other cities, including Lynwood, Ill., and Flint, Mich., have passed similar measures, but none appear to have pursued violators as aggressively as Riviera Beach. Since the law took effect last July, 15 to 20 young men have been charged with violating the ordinance, defense lawyers say.

But with many of the cases pending, the office of the Palm Beach County Public Defender last week challenged the ordinance on constitutional grounds.

Two assistant public defenders representing three defendants argued before Judge Lisa Johnson Nurik of County Court in nearby Palm Beach Gardens that the ordinance and its enforcement violated principles of freedom of expression and of due process. They added that enforcement of the ordinance has exclusively focused on young black men.

Mayor Thomas Masters, a Baptist minister, said in an interview that Riviera Beach voters "just got tired of having to look at people's behinds as they are hanging down." but the public defenders argued that saggy pants were a constitutionally protected expression of identity.

The court will hear the city's final arguments on April 22. Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard on Wednesday, a sidewalk on young man with plaid boxers showing over his pants declined to talk about the style. But others standing in front of a couples of barracks-like apartments applauded the ordinance, calling it "stupid" and "a bad law."

"There are a bunch of other laws about clothes they should make," said Carlos Edwards, sitting in a church van. Edwards cited the use of swastikas by teenagers involved in the Columbine massacre. AFP

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Editor Raul D. Mercado • Assistant Editor Cornie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

RP expected to grow only 0.8% this year

Brokerage says economy running out of momentum

By Bunnel W. Dumlao

INVESTMENT BANKING GROUP CLSA SAID IN ITS LATEST REPORT on Asia-Pacific economies that the Philippines would grow only 0.8 percent this year, the lowest forecast made so far by any investment adviser, multilateral lender or credit agency.

In a study on the Philippines prepared by Sharada Whelan, CLSA said the country was "steadily running out of momentum" along with other economies in the region.

CLSA added that the growth of Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) would slow even further at 0.7 percent in 2010.

Gross domestic product is the total output of goods made and services rendered within an economy for a given period.

The group said such slowdowns would be driven by a contraction in export volumes by 10 percent, which would have a "large knock effect on industrial production and on investment spending."

"Judging by the regional trend of consumer year-on-year declines in February it is likely Philippine exports fell again at double-digit rates (that month), following a drop of 41 percent in January)," CLSA said.

The stockbrokerage firm noted that the Philippines' exports to its biggest markets—the United States, Japan and Hong Kong, three economies which are now facing social recession—were falling faster and faster.

MI EXPECTED RE

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.43 percent lower yesterday due to profit-taking after a four-day rally, dealers said.

The composite index gave up 29.61 points to 2,043.28, while the all-shares index fell 8.55 percent to 1,201.72 points.

There were 40 gainers, 42 losers and 61 unchanged.

Volume totaled 1.93 billion shares worth P2.81 billion.

"Basically the market is just profit-taking from last week," said Ammar Lazcano of Lampos Lazcano and Co. Inc.

"The market is overbought," he added.

Energy Development Corp. fell 14.6 percent to P3.80 while Bank of the Philippine Islands dropped 1.34 percent to P57.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was unchanged at P2,209.

AFP

Electronics industry starting to recover

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER A BAD FIRST QUARTER, THE ELECtronics industry seems to be showing signs of recovery, officials at a key electronics group, according to an industry executive.

Arthur Wong, chair of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. (Seipi), said there were indications that the market has hit its lowest and that things should get better for the rest of the year.

"There are no final first-quarter numbers yet, but it looks like from March onwards, we are seeing month-to-month improvements," he said. "It's still far from where we used to be, but at least it looks like the market has bottomed out and things are improving, although slowly, but improving nevertheless."

Despite this, he said Seipi was keeping its 2009 forecast of a decline of 20-30 percent in semiconductor exports.

"On the decline, it's still too early to say if there will be any changes to that range," he said.

In an earlier interview, Seipi president Ernesto Santiago said this year would be the first time the industry would experience a double-digit decline.

"We don't know yet how to handle it. It's the first time we're encountering a double-digit drop," he said. "But we must continue to do the right thing to prepare for our future purpose. All is not doom and gloom."

Wong had earlier said the electronics industry was not expected to really bounce back until 2011, but minimal growth should already be felt by next year.

He said 2010 would be "a growth year" for the industry as exports start to recover from the 2009 slump.

ELECTRONICS BC

RCBC to offer up to ₱4B in tier 2 capital this month

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE YUCHENGCO-LED COMmercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) is set to offer ₱4 billion worth of debt notes qualifying as tier 2 or supplementary capital later this month.

RCBC president Lorenzo Tan yesterday said the bank, which recently obtained the go-ahead from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to underwrite the bond raising, has also mandated British bank Standard Chartered as lead underwriter for the transaction.

Tan said the bank was targeting to hold a roadshow for prospective investors in Manila on April 20 and another session in Cebu on April 21.

It is expected to list on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE). RCBC said the plan was to issue 10-year unsecured debt notes, which carry a call option after the fifth year, allowing the bank to redeem subordinated notes in accordance with the requirements on subordinated debt.

The BSP allows local banks to issue tier 2 or subordinated debt notes to comply with capital adequacy requirements.

The bank said it aimed to "grow its core business by further expanding its branch network and becoming a 'one-stop' financial center for its customers."

RCBC to date has expanded its customer reach via traditional bricks and mortar, or branch networks—as well as electronic channels.

The bank has also expanded through the acquisition of other banks in recent years. It was earlier reported that RCBC was in talks to take over Export and Industry Bank, the commercial bank that earlier acquired the defunct Urban Bank.

After more than a year of on-and-off negotiations, RCBC was nearing a deal with the consent of Export Bank.

The 50-branch Export Bank has about ₱32 billion in total resources, ₱9.4 billion in net loan portfolio and ₱26 billion in deposits, based on its latest financial statement as of end-September last year.

A merger between the two banks will create an institution with about ₱389 billion in resources and total assets breaching the ₱400-billion mark. RCBC is then seen to cement its ranking among the country's 10 biggest banks.

RCBC has mapped out a strategy to expand both organically and through mergers and acquisitions. Only recently, RCBC announced an agreement to take over the Lucio Tan family's JP Laurel Rural Bank at Batangas for ₱373 million, aiming to use the 30-branch rural bank as a platform to enter the microfinance business. Last year, RCBC acquired the 21-branch Mortgage Savings and Loan Association from Pioneer Capital Corp. and the banks of the late Lutz Manager for ₱620 million.

Taps Standard Chartered as underwriter

Is it time to buy?

MARKET READER

Ben Saavedra

"IS IT TIME TO BUY?" THIS IS MORE or less the gist of the queries I received in my e-mail as a result of my statement last week—that market sentiment is changing and judging from where market prices have travelled, it may just happen that a bull market is already in play.

Happy Easter! I hope the Lenten break gave you a new dimension out of the experience as well as the necessary zest for fresh energy to ably attack the market, us to speak. And, by the way, thank you for the warm welcome and encouraging response to my first article.

The Hunt

Due to the declaration of Monday last week as a legal holiday (in commemoration of Bataan Day *devigmat*, all officially for you information as Day of Valor or how ng Kagitingan, just to ease you have forgotten), together with Thursday and Friday as non-working holidays in observance of Holy Week, we only had two trading days last week (Tuesday, April 7, and Wednesday, April 8).

In comparison, Wall Street went on with its normal trading schedule and did not close for the Lenten break until Good Friday.

Normally, we track the record and performance of Wall Street, viz., as our market opened for trading on Tuesday, local shares deviated to follow Wall Street's trading lead on Monday silence in suffered a downturn for the first time following its huge four-week rally, reportedly the longest weekly climb Wall Street achieved since 2007.

As a result, the PSEi ended 23.10 points or 1.34-percent higher at 1,051.68 over an seven-day-based buying binge in turnover equivalent to ₱2.76 billion, lower than that, the PSEi broke its previous high of 2,010, its market's immediate resistance.

On Wednesday, as trading was to end for the week, local shares continued to be affected by Wall Street's rumble for the second day on Tuesday, where by then the the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) had lost more than 200 points in the process that the PSEi closed again higher by 21.12 points at 2,072.83, pulling along the All Shares index higher, too.

Statistically, market turnover was again bigger than usual for the session at ₱2.67 billion. But the outlook foreign buying in foreign selling appeared to widen, unlike the week before.

Based on the results of trading on Wednesday, while the market was already oversold, it had technically broken out "from its strong resistance (at 2,000), presumably to confirm the general impression of an apparent trend reversal to a bullish market.

Is it time, then, to buy?

Secret of the Past

I can probably give a decent answer that will help you considerably to a decision you will take. But the answer may not result not exactly right, for the market is constantly changing in unpredictable ways like the weather and could be unfortunable in the test.

As I have found out from experience, a market history can be similar as the one we may have today. But they are not actually the same. They will always be different in that are reverse of difference since line. They can have similarities but they will resolve always in different ways. This is why I don't subscribe on "scientific forecast," as I said before. And this is one very reason why I do so don't strictly resort to predictive tools using the past.

To answer the question, then, I would suggest going back to the "root issue" of the present market situation. As far as I can see, the market as of last week has put chosen or created for the the "possibility" of the occurrence of an event—a market rally that can move into a bull market.

Insider Lies

Therefore, this week could be an interesting time. Just like on Wall Street after its huge four-week rally, some profit-taking may ensue. The market has been on a rally for at least two weeks. Momentum indicators have also been giving signs that the market is trading on overbought territory. A sure sign that stock prices could head down lower anytime soon.

But looking at the prices and trading performance of much of the stocks across the board, some profit-taking has already taken place or that stock prices could roll-over go higher. Blue board issue sale transactions seem to support this assessment. They continue to be significant, taking as much as 40 percent of total market turnover.

A closer look at the trend of foreign selling to foreign buying last week, however, reflects a different story. Foreign selling transaction last week started to pull away and widen its disparity with foreign buying. If it continues, this could create a market sell down that could result in a market pullback or correction.

Following the investor model Dow Theory, saying here, I'd refrain from making conclusions and immediate actions. Based on the trading results last week, the occurrence of a bull market is, in fact, only a possibility. It is short of the confirmation my investment model requires.

As described, the stock trading books, the trading trends is only what is called the market "set up." We need more than that. We need actual confirmation or "trigger" seen from additional data, news or signal. The trigger may appear this week. So, watch out for it.

(The article has been prepared for general circulation to the trading public and must not be construed as an offer, or solicitation of an offer to buy or sell any securities or financial instruments whether referred to herein or otherwise. Moreover, the public should be aware that the writer or any investing parties mentioned in the column may have a conflict of interest that could affect the objectivity of that reported or mentioned investment activity. You may reach The Market Reader at ben.saavedra@yahoo.com.)

RP expected to grow only 0.8% this year

From page B1

CLSA projected that this year, the United States would continue to go in -4 percent. Japan by 0.4 percent and Hong Kong by 5.4 percent.

Even then, CLSA said it remained bearish about the outlook for investment spending even as consumer spending so far was holding up well.

"Philippine manufacturers face similar pressures to their Asian peers [such as] falling investment demand, which is translating into squeezes on profit margins," it added.

Such squeeze, in turn, forces companies to rein in costs and shelve capital expenditure plans vs being production capacity in line with lower demand projections.

The Asian Development Bank has forecast real spending to slow down by 4 percent this year amid expectations of slower growth in country remittance inflows.

"We do expect government spending to run this year by 11.7 percent and this, along with falling import and OBE, will provide some relief but not enough to forestall a sharp slowdown in economic growth," it said.

In comparison, credit watchers like Standard and Poor's forecast Philippine GDP to grow 2.2 percent to 2.7 percent, Moody's Investment Service by 1 percent, and Fitch Ratings by 2 percent.

Multilateral lenders like the Asian Development Bank lists on 2.5 percent, the International Monetary Fund on 2.25 percent and the World Bank on 1.9 percent.

Other investment advisory like UBS and HSBC put the number at 1.8 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively.

The government's official target, as of the latest, is between 2.7 percent and 4.4 percent.

Electronics industry starting to recover

From page B1

"We expect high single-digit growth in 2010, but we won't see good strong recovery until 2011. By then, the credit issue should have been fixed, as we expect double-digit growth that year," he said.

This year, he said the industry would be suffering from "non-visibility" with none of the players knowing how sales would turn out for the rest of the year.

He said the first quarter would be the worst for the industry.

The most read Golf magazine in the Philippines

Insurers see growth this year

Life insurance firms' revenue seen up by 7-10%

By Dyann L. Lucas

THE LOCAL LIFE INSURANCE INDUSTRY is expected to post modest growth this year despite the generally weak economic environment and volatile financial markets.

At a briefing yesterday, Philippine Life Insurance Association president Victor Quisumbing said he was expecting the revenues of life insurance firms to grow by 7-10 percent in 2009.

Quisumbing said this pace was considerably slower than the 17-percent average growth of insurance premiums reported by members of the industry last year.

"This is a good indication of the public's response to our efforts," he said, noting the resilience of market demand amid the general destabilizers on the part of financial investors.

"We also experienced a change in investors' preferences in terms of products."

PLIA director and Philippine-American Life and Assurance Co. chair and CEO Jose L. Cuisia Jr. said the industry's sales were being aided by the insurance firms' conservative stance in their choice of investment outlets.

"The bulk of our investments are still in government securities," he said. In the case of Philam, he said its exposure to the volatile stock market was down to 1 percent of its portfolio, from a high of 6 percent in recent years.

Cuisia conceded, however, that prevailing market conditions had cut into the overall profitability of insurance firms, especially when viewed against trends of the last five or 10 years.

In particular, insurance firms have been earning less from bonds due to declining interest rates, less from a weak stock market and less from a tepid real estate sector.

Cuisia said the challenge for companies was to improve margins through other means.

According to Quisumbing, the projected growth in revenue this year will come from more aggressive marketing efforts especially with companies increasing their sales forces.

"We will also have to offer more innovative products, and some companies will venture into the Canal Transformer."

Quisumbing noted there remained a significant upside for the local industry despite the rising times, especially since the insurance penetration rate in the Philippines stood at only 11 to 14 percent. This means only this percentage of the population is covered by insurance. This is lower than the 20 percent achieved earlier this decade.

when the economy was performing better and before some investors were deterred by the troubles in the personal industry.

"Definitely, the potential for growth is there," Quisumbing said.

DA orders audit of agri facilities

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR C. Yap said he had ordered an internal audit of all government facilities put up by various offices and attached agencies of his department.

Deep-cell centers, ReDeI dryers, tractors, cold chain facilities, fish ports, shredders and slaughter houses are all up for audit.

In a statement, Yap said he had assigned Assistant Secretary Salvador Salonga to lead the audit team that would start validating post-harvest projects this week.

The move, according to Yap, is aimed at ensuring transparency in the implementation of all projects of the department.

He said that monitoring would also assist in "a more judicious disbursing of public funds to farmer beneficiaries" through program partners such as local government units, nongovernment organizations and people's organization. Rhea T. Olobosadiz

Election speeding

WHAT IS THE USE OF THE COMMISSION ON Elections or Comelec all of a sudden turns to a diligent outfit that is confused sometime during the Holy Week?

On Tuesday last week, you see, while everybody else was preparing for the long weekend vacation, the Comelec was moved to issue a bulletin.

It had something to do with the knockout P11-billion election automation project, which our government was rushing for the 2010 elections.

Basically, the bulletin lowered the lists on the qualifications of the bidders for the hi-tech project. Sweet!

***

NONE OF OHS sources in the commission would as yet say that when the public opening the rumored interested bidders—the bulletin was issued.

Insiders just said the bulletin required the bidders to each have at least P5,540-line worth of project in "automated election system" in the past two years.

Read that as "expertise" in election automation, please!

But then again the bulletin qualifies it still, according to our sources, backtracking a little, sort of saying that "all right, if it was not an "automated election system," sign on ups, it could be any IT project.

And I mean "any," even if it had nothing to do whatsoever with election automation system. Legit!

***

I AM NOT sure is it a nine move, the Comelec allowing such record to "any" IT project as a criterion for bidders for the P11-billion contract.

The Comelec, of course, wants to speed up the award of the contract. Thus, it wants as many bidders as possible to qualify it is trying to avoid a failed bidding.

It seems to be an ever speeding violation. Let's say no IT company provides services for a bank or a telephone company—or for that matter, a fogic factory. For years, boys, thanks to the new Comelec bulletin, such a company can possibly win in the bidding?

I am sure the world has hundreds of respectable IT companies. The thing is, not all of them have the experience in election automation.

Do we really want all of them knocking on the Comelec's door? Indeed, the Comelec sole can open the door to appoint outside bids.

Besides, for this particular project, the law requires a system that was tried and tested, meaning, that was the taxpayer's who should foot the cost—are actually paying a good deal for certainty that the system will work.

The alternative is chaos.

***

AND I HAVE another beef. The project does not only involve a working technology.

Much more than the hardware, it requires expertise in management, personnel training and logistics.

Look, boss, the eventual winner in the bidding will have to deploy some 80,000 automation units, a good number of them in remote areas that have no electricity.

I am not a techie but I do know that, for such a task, you just cannot send your driver or bodyguard. You need technical people. They need a lot of training that not just "any" IT company can do.

Come on, even the voters will have to be trained how to use the machines.

***

QUICK—WHAT is the fastest growing computer software company in the world?

Well, it is a little known Swedish company called QlikTech, which developed the business intelligence software "QlikView."

Now, business intelligence is not a living thing under the office carpet. It's a system of compiling and analyzing corporate data for the decision makers. You know—the bosses!

Anyway, according to its website, QlikTech had only some 1,200 customers three years ago. The number has ballooned to almost 11,000 today.

I think I have an idea why: The system costs only half of other similar software, while it is at the same time easy to use, which makes it easy to learn, which in turn makes for shorter implementation time.

Here, the ruthless seller of the software is a company called PowerPivot data, which also has a website.

Although it is an IT company, I know it is not bidding for the Comelec contract.

***

WHAT KIND of animal is this "turn-key" franchising anyway?

Every think tank from here to the next galaxy has been advising DPWH who lost their jobs due to the worldwide economic crisis to consider "turn-key" franchising as a new means of livelihood.

Well, there is a forthcoming "Franchise Expo" at the SMX Convention Center (near the Mall of Asia) on July 3 to 5.

The venue will surely have a lot of info he would be turn-key franchisees. Almost all the franchisers will be there.

***

IS THE SEAL ratten secret, word goes around that the Bureau of Internal Revenue is investigating one of the country's biggest real estate firms for tax evasion.

The BIR supposedly got a tip that the company, which has already landed in the list of top corporations in the Philippines, did not pay the proper capital gains tax for a condo project in Makati.

According to BIR insiders, the company used an old trick in the tax evasion book.

First, the company enters into a joint venture with the lot owner in build a condo, with the lot owner putting in the property as capital in the newly formed joint venture company and the developer shouldering the construction cost.

Under such an arrangement, the joint venture does not have to pay for the capital gains tax.

Here's the catch—the real estate company then does not waste any time in buying the interest of the lot owner in the joint venture.

The BIR frowns on such a practice. And so I understand that the condo project may put on hold because of the BIR investigation.

US group in Asia warns of protectionist policies

SINGAPORE—AN ORGANIZATION representing US companies in Asia warned "Buy American" type policies could spark retaliation from other countries and undermine global trade.

The Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce, which represents more than 10,000 US businesses, urged the government to avoid protectionism and move toward expanding trade agreements with Asia.

The House of Representatives sought to include a provision in a $787-billion economic stimulus package that required firms receiving stimulus money to buy American products such as iron, steel and manufactured goods.

But the final version passed by the Senate in February included a requirement that projects avoid protectionist trade policies that violate international treaties.

"The temptation is to adopt protectionist policies, but it's self-defeating," said Edwin Paulson, the council's chair. "Anything called 'Buy American' is not good for trade. It's psychologically damaging."

Paulson said she was not aware that any Asian government had currently banned American trade.

The council is also lobbying Congress to lower taxes for Americans living abroad. Specifically, it wants legislation to eliminate 2006 changes that lowered housing allowances and raised tax rates.

"They created a disincentive to hire Americans abroad," Paulson said. "Many Americans are finding it very difficult to stay in many markets."

"My hope we can persuade the tax-writing committees in Congress to reverse these changes."

The United States is the only developed country that taxes its citizens for income earned abroad, Paulson said. AP

Asia stocks rise on Japan stimulus

HONG KONG—ASIAN MARKETS gained more ground Monday as Japan's new $150-billion stimulus plan and upbeat news about Chinese bank lending boosted hopes for recovery in the region's major economies.

Trade was thinner than normal with many investors still away for a public holiday and several markets closed.

A stronger dollar combined with Tokyo's latest measures helped suppress the Euro and Pound. Oil prices slipped below $52 a barrel.

Japan's newest effort, unveiled Friday, calls for 15 trillion yen ($150 billion) in government spending and aims to arrest a slide in the world's second largest economy caused by an unprecedented drop in global demand. The country is suffering through its most painful recession since World War II.

The move is part of a world wide effort by governments to restore growth. China's stimulus measures have become a major source of optimism among investors in Asia.

News that bank lending surged last month reinforced a belief that Beijing's massive government spending and easier fiscal policies will lead consumers and businesses to ask more money into the economy and help China stage a quicker recovery.

Loans in March surged to a record high of almost 1.9 trillion yuan (about $279 billion), Chinese media reported over the weekend.

Signs that economies and the financial system may stabilize in the coming months have led investors back to riskier markets over the last month, though any surprisingly bad news could trip up the upswing rally. This week, they'll be watching quarterly corporate results from major banks such as Citigroup and Goldman Sachs Group.

"We still have a number of hurdles that we're going to have to jump in the coming weeks, and this could keep the markets somewhat uneasy," said Thomas Lam, senior economist at the United Overseas Bank in Singapore. "But compared to say a month or two ago there is obviously a general sense that there is recording in the market."

South Korea's Kospi gained 4.18, or 0.3 percent, to 1,340.22, while Shanghai's main stock index climbed 2.9 percent to 2,312.31.

Japan's Nikkei 225 stock average fluctuated, trading down by 28.39 points, or 0.3 percent, to 8,955.81.

Taiwan and Singapore stock measures were higher as well. Hong Kong, India, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia were closed for a public holiday Monday.

US markets, closed Friday for a holiday, were set to reopen Monday.

Wall Street futures were down, suggesting a weak opening after stocks jumped Thursday. Dow futures fell 48 points, or 0.6 percent, to 7,805 and S&P 500 futures lost 5 points, or 0.6 percent, to 847.80.

Oil prices fell below $52 a barrel Monday in Asia after the International Energy Agency said it expects global crude demand to drop this year amid the worst worldwide recession in decades.

Benchmark crude for May delivery fell 64 cents to $51.68 a barrel. The contract on Wednesday rose $2.86 to settle at $52.24 a barrel. Trading was closed on Friday for the Good Friday holiday.

In currencies, the dollar gained to 100.33 yen from 100.22 yen. The euro was lower at $1.3172 from $1.3183. AP

Chinese bank lending boosts hope for recovery in region

China's rise as economic power worries South Korea

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA ON MONDAY expressed its concerns about China's rise as a global economic power in a rare note that said the nascent of its powerful neighbor could harm its own economic growth.

The Ministry of Strategy and Finance said in an eight-page "unforeseen material" that China's growing clout was likely to intensify competition between the two countries, especially in export markets and energy diplomacy.

That contrasted with the past practice of describing China's economic growth as an opportunity for South Korea to keep producing export goods for other markets using cheap labor, as well as a threat in its exports, the ministry said in the statement.

"Competition with China is expected to intensify in such export markets as Latin America and Asia because China's recent currency swap arrangements will enable yuan to be used in trade settlements."

China has grabbed the media headlines around the world in the past for its fast emergence as a driver of global economic growth and more recently as the potential savior of the global economy mired in the worst recession in many decades.

"In response to the spreading 'Beijing Consensus,' our countries also needs to adopt preemptive national economic policy," the Finance ministry said, referring to a phrase used to describe China's growing influence.

Seoul analysts said South Korea lacked the economic scale or resources to compete with its giant neighbor in global markets and should focus on diplomatic and economic inroads to help achieve unification with the North.

"China would pay much higher prices than the market value when acquiring energy projects abroad, so [South Korea] can't compete with it," said Roh Hun-soon, a senior fellow at Samsung Economic Research Institute.

"If China has 'hard power,' we have to think about enriching 'soft power,'" he said, referring to such resources as South Korea's entertainment and corporate networks.

The finance ministry's statement also came after South Korea's efforts to secure more offshore energy supplies hit a snag early this year after Nigeria canceled exploration rights to oilfields first awarded in 2005.

South Korean state-run natural resources, has rolled heavily on experts in power in the from the rubble of the 1950-53 Korean War to become the world's 13th largest economy.

But Chinese industry with its abundance of cheap labor and strong backing from the communist government, has emerged as a strong rival in key export markets, especially in such resource-poor countries as South Korea to catch up with the world's most developed economies. Reuters

A CUSTOMER writes a request form at a currency exchange center of the Korea Exchange Bank in Seoul. South Korea on Monday expressed its concern about China's rise as a global economic power in a rare note that said the nascent of its powerful neighbor could harm its own economic growth. China's emerging clout was likely to intensify competition between the two countries, especially in export markets and energy diplomacy. The statement said China is expected to intensify its export markets as Latin America and Asia because China's recent currency swap arrangements will enable yuan to be used in trade settlements. AP PHOTO

US institute names 99 top ethical firms

NEW YORK—THE ETHISPHERE Institute on Monday named 99 companies it says are the world's most ethical, its third annual listing designed to encourage ethical practices within the global business community.

The 99 companies, which include Honeywell International Inc., Nike Inc., Patagonia, BMW Bayerische Motoren Werke AG, Johnson Controls Inc. and HSBC Holdings PLC, come from 35 different industries.

"The mission of our group is to improve corporate behavior," said Alex Brigham, executive director of the Ethisphere Institute, an international think tank based in New York dedicated to the advancement of best practices in business ethics, corporate social responsibility and corruption and sustainability.

The companies are chosen against their peers within their industry, as such industry operates under different circumstances, Brigham said.

The rankings are based on factors that go to the heart of corporate governance and environmentalism, the institute said, including innovation that contributes to public well being and the use of fewer resources. They also are judged on corporate governance, legal and regulatory reputation and track record, executive leadership, industry leadership, and internal systems and ethics compliance programs. Reuters

New US rules may taint results of big banks

NEW YORK—THE WORLD WILL finally get a peek into the finances of troubled US banks this week as earnings season gets under way, but recent accounting changes mean investors may not know what to make of them.

High-profile names like Goldman Sachs, Citigroup and JP Morgan will report their first-quarter results following the Easter holiday for other companies. Analysts say it will be difficult to gauge losses from bad loans in areas like real estate and consumer credit.

"It doesn't engender great enthusiasm," said Joseph Battipaglia of Wild Hibiscus in Yardley, Pennsylvania. "You have a dispersion-cycle handing off the uncertainty/banking system."

The helps among policy makers is that, unlike in Japan's "lost decade" of deflation, the shift can hold the banking sector together for long enough that the economy will recover, allowing it to unwind heavy recent losses.

The US economy is on track for its worst recession since World War II, and its ailments have dragged global output into a rut as well. One major problem is a sharp retrenchment in US consumer spending, the most in more in many decades.

Given the sheer magnitude of the pullback, economists are hoping for some sort of rebound. Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke said last week that "green shoots" of activity were beginning to emerge, and economists are forecasting a 0.4 percent increase in US retail sales for March.

Lawrence Summers, a top adviser to President Barack Obama, said on Thursday the US economy would halt its "free fall" within a few months as government stimulus and rescue efforts take hold.

Some investors agreed.

"A lot of the leading indicators, if not turning up, appear to have bottomed," said Lee Oliver, fixed-income strategist at SMH Capital, in Houston.

Many analysts believe clearing out massive financial sector losses, which the International Monetary Fund estimates will reach $1.4 trillion, is key to reviving economic activity around the globe.

Some also see the US housing sector, where the first inklings of the global financial crisis first emerged, may begin recovering before financial institutions themselves can see a light at the end of the tunnel. Reuters

Islam finance scholars urged to go global

DUBAI—ISLAMIC FINANCE SCHOLARS are not doing enough to promote the industry globally as an alternative to traditional banking after the global financial meltdown, a top executive said on Monday.

Sohail Zubairi, chief executive of Islamic consultancy firm Dar al-Sharia, a unit of United Islamic Bank, said Islamic scholars had not responded to the economic crisis with a unified voice, missing an opportunity to push the industry into Western Europe and the US.

"My personal view is we don't have a central voice in Islamic finance," Zubairi said. "They did not reach out to the conventional financial centers.

"When not doing a service to the world by keeping it to ourselves ... These things are to be shared. Sharia tells you that it is not for Muslims only it is for humanity."

Demand from the world's 1.5 billion Muslims for investments that comply with their beliefs has soared, with financial centers such as Paris and London vying to become Islamic finance hubs for Western markets.

But scholars, although they have AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions) in Bahrain, as one unified voice we don't hear them," Zubairi said. "They are scattered. There was an opportunity and in my opinion, the scholars have let us down."

Dar al-Sharia was set up in July 2008 by United Islamic Bank to provide financial and legal consultancy for the Islamic finance industry on an international level. Its mandate includes carrying out research and development, providing training on the sector, auditing and issuing fatwas.

"Now we are talking about the failure of capitalism. Communism has entered from the back door to help capitalism, which is a pity," Zubairi said. "Even if they are trying to repair the old tried and tested system, in my opinion, it won't work. The Islamic financial system is a perfect system."

Dar al-Sharia said Dar al-Sharia had put on hold plans to expand its services in the United Kingdom and Pakistan due in part to the financial crisis. Reuters

Report: GM told to prepare for bankruptcy filing

WASHINGTON—THE US TREASURY Department is directing General Motors to lay the groundwork for a bankruptcy filing by June 1, even though the automaker has publicly vowed to avoid the step, people close to the matter said, The New York Times reported on Sunday.

GM is operating under emergency US government loans. It has been told by the Obama administration's task force overseeing its bailout that it must slash costs and reduce its debts in order to continue to receive aid.

The White House-appointed auto task force has given GM 60 days to come up with a restructuring plan and it is trying to determine whether the automaker can be a viable company.

Quoting sources who had been briefed on the GM plans, the Times said the goal was to prepare for a fast "surgical" bankruptcy.

The newspaper said preparations are aimed at ensuring a GM bankruptcy filing is ready if the company is unable to reach agreements with bondholders to exchange roughly $20 billion in debt into equity in GM and with the United Automobile Workers union.

A plan under consideration would create a new company that would buy the "good" assets of GM after the carmaker files for bankruptcy, the Times said.

Less desirable assets, including unsecured bonds, factories and health care obligations, would be left in the old company, which could be liquidated over several years, according to the paper.

Treasury officials are examining one potential outcome in which the viable GM stores and exits bankruptcy protection in as little as two weeks, using $30 billion to $35 billion in federal financing, a person briefed on the matter told the Times.

The Times sources declined to be identified because they were not authorized to discuss the process. Both GM and Treasury Department officials declined to comment, the newspaper said.

Last week, GM's chief executive said the automaker seemed to accelerate out of court, but also preparing for a bankruptcy filing. Reuters

Asean endorses regional capital market

Plan described to be key in boosting region

By Reena/W. Domingo

FINANCE MINISTERS OF THE Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have endorsed the implementation of a plan to develop an integrated capital market for the region, which they see as key in helping Asean countries weather the current and future financial turbulence.

The officials, who included Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves, made the endorsement following the 15th Asean Finance Ministers meeting held in Pattaya, Thailand last April 9.

"The ministers were able to finish their meeting, but other meetings, like the Asean heads of government summit, were canceled due to unforeseen circumstances.

In a joint statement, the ministers said the plan is set up an integrated regional capital market would strengthen financial intermediation, enhance capacity and manage risks to support sustained and regional growth.

"We believe the core principles of the plan, which includes a mutual recognition and harmonization framework of supervisory, legal and country coverage ... are essential components of our efforts to integrate our capital markets," they said.

Also, the ministers agreed to undertake a study on assessing the financial landscape in the Asean region. The study would map out the current financial sector regimes within the region, as well as identify the gaps and constraints that inhibit financial integration.

They also said the study would help develop a comprehensive framework with specific recommendations and timelines for advancing the progressive liberalization of financial services, while recognizing the different levels of financial services development and conditions among Asean members.

Further, the finance chiefs said that, following the conclusion of services negotiations—including finance services—in the Asean's free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand, they will continue to engage other dialog partners to ensure the increase of overall modern access between Asean and its trading partners.

Asean's other dialog partners include China, Japan, South Korea, India, the United States and the European Union.

The ministers also said that they have reaffirmed Asean's commitment to the liberalization of cross-border capital flows, resolving "to take all necessary actions, including regional cooperative efforts, to manage and cope with sudden reversals and large volatilities in international capital flows."

The Asean seeks to put up a single market and production hub in the region, or the so-called Asean Economic Community by 2015.

Asean is made up of the the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam.

NGCP starts maintenance work on substations

By Jerry R. Baron

TO PREVENT POWER FAILures during the summer season, National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) said it was implementing preventive maintenance of its substation facilities nationwide.

NGCP the new operator of the country's electricity superhighway, said this would ensure the safety, reliability, and efficiency of the power grid.

NGCP, which took over the National Transmission Corp.'s concession in January this year, has contracted to be more "efficient, reliable, flexible and responsive, taking advantage of its position as a private sector enterprise."

"NGCP is engaged to advanced operational practices and techniques to further reduce, if not eliminate, the tripping of lines and ensure grid disturbance in all its facilities," the company said in a statement.

According to NGCP, it has been conducting preventive maintenance efforts in shorter, more manageable phases, noting that several lines are "very critical and cannot be taken out of service even for a short period of time."

Maintenance activities of transmission facilities started early this year in preparation for summer when demand for electricity is expected to peak.

This involved the testing of protective relays from three systems, infrared thermal scanning, battery load capacity tests, dissolved gas analysis, ultrasonic inspection, corona grounding tests, and leakage current monitoring.

Firm eyes build-to-suit buildings for BPO firms

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EXTRADORDINARY GROUP of companies is looking at going beyond just land development and extending its products to include build-to-suit facilities for business process outsourcing locators.

Extraordinary Group president and chief executive Victor Hinosaraog said that while there seem to be doubts on plans yet regarding this, the company was readying new such facilities.

"Right now we're only doing land development, but we're also looking at putting up buildings for locators," he said, noting that areas south of Manila, particularly Laguna, was exposed to because increasingly attractive to BPO firms hoping to expand outside of Metro Manila.

One Asia Development Corp.'s One Asia Business Center, located in the Ayala-Alabang Metro Bloom (1998) township of Zuellig Royale Corp., also of the Extraordinary Group, is now awaiting President Arroyo's signature to become a full-fledged information technology park.

"I think this is the only development in Bloom that is geared towards IT and BPO," he said. "The Bloom is already attracting BPO locators because of the well educated residents here. We don't expect this growth to be that fast, but we believe that growth will be there."

RP bourse best performer in SE Asia in Q1

By Dave C. Dantes

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHange performed better than most exchanges in Southeast Asia in the first quarter despite the lingering global financial turmoil.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index, the main index barometer of overall stock market performance, gained 6.61 percent in the first three months closing at 1,986.22.

Except for the Jakarta Composite index, which closed higher by 8.38 percent in the same period, the rest of the region remained lower. The Kuala Lumpur Composite index dipped 5.46 percent, while the Straits Times Index of Singapore fell 15 percent in the first quarter.

The Stock Exchange of Thailand index declined 6.1 percent, while the Vietnam Stock Index plunged 11.07 percent.

"We are not spared from the wrath of the contagion yet. Our strong fundamentals have kept our heads above water when others have sunk in the storm," Phil president and chief executive officer Francis Lim said in a statement.

In March alone, the PSEi went up by 8.09 percent, its biggest month-on-month gain in almost a year-and-a-half. At the close of trades yesterday, the PSEi's closing level of 2,043.28 reflected a year-to-date growth of 9.1 percent.

"The figures bear out what we have been hoping for all along. But investors recognize the positive impact of the stimulus that have been set in place and put strong weight on market fundamentals. We think the government for the fiscal and economic reforms it has executed to help lift investor confidence. We at the PSE have also done our part in implementing reforms to boost stock market investments during these tough times," Lim said.

The domestic market capitalization of listed companies in March reached 10.66 trillion, the highest end-of-the-month level since October 2008, when the level hit 10.61 trillion. It was also 7.5 percent higher than the end-December domestic capitalization of 09.67 trillion, but lower than the end-March level last year of 10.52 trillion.

Value turnover has also been steadily growing this year. From a thin P1.49 billion daily average turnover in January, the amount grew to 91.76 billion in February and to 95.7 billion a day in March.

A TRADER looks at an electronic monitor at the trading floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Group sees considerable drop in global oil demand

By Jerry R. Baron

WITH ECONOMIC AND OIL DEmand recovery seen to set in next year, global oil demand is expected to fall by 1 million barrels a day (bpd) to 83.4 million barrels a day in 2009, according to the International Energy Agency.

The a report issued last Friday, the Paris-based IEA said the revised forecast was based on a reassessment of gross domestic product (GDP) assumptions and much lower-than-expected first quarter demand data.

Last month, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) had said that oil production this year could likely drop to only 84.8 mb/d.

Already, output by Opec member-countries had declined by 220,000 barrels a day in an average of 27.8 mb/d in March, compared to the previous month's level.

IEA—an energy policy advisor composed of 28 countries—also expected that non-Opec output is also expected to fall to some 50.3 mb/d in 2009 from last year's output of 50.6 mb/d.

According to IEA, lower global crude runs are expected to persist through the second and third quarters of the year.

Also, IEA noted that benchmark crude prices had already exceeded the $50-a-barrel price for the first time in four months, as more bullish sentiment entered financial markets in late March and early April.

"Prices recently have reached expectations for the global economy, seeking signs of demand recovery. However, persistently weak market fundamentals could limit further gains be seen," it added.

In the Philippines, Zenaida Rhoenda, director of the energy department's oil industry management bureau, said local demand in 2009 may likely remain "more or less" the same as last year.

Abenaria said in an interview that the low retail prices of petroleum products compared to year-ago levels could partially offset any slowdown or cutback on the usage of these products. She also cited observations that the global financial slowdown had a relatively minimal effect on the local economy.

Data from the DOE showed that volume of oil imports in 2008 had slightly declined by 1.6 percent to 110.4 million barrels, from the previous year's 121.1 million barrels.

LIFESTYLE Wellness
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

How the CEO becomes an Ironman

'When you're out on a long journey, it gives you a chance to think clearer,' says Fred Uytengsu. His advice to weekend triathletes: Train within your heart level

FRED Uytengsu toward the finish line

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

WHEN WILFRED STEVEN "Fred" Uytengsu Jr., president and CEO of Alaska Milk Corporation, joined his first Ironman competition in 2002, he almost quit.

Like other participants, he didn't understand the preparation and the science behind this grueling series of long-distance triathlon featuring 3.8-km. he didn't make it in 10 km, a fraction of the required distance to the marathon run. He also got off twice in the bike race, suffering from cramps.

"That's it. I'm done," he heaved with exasperation.

His wife, Inez, a fitness buff herself, prompted him: "If you don't finish this, you'll never forgive yourself!"

Although his first sea was below the standards, Uytengsu finally realized that the essence of the Ironman triathlon was perseverance.

"You don't quit unless there's an accident or your body fails you, but not if you have a lot of pains. You go in there realizing you will suffer and it's a fact of life. Therefore, you take as you suffer less. If you improve your time, you are on the course is less duration. If you extrapolate less hours, then there's less pain in endure," he says.

Must-do

Uytengsu has become the poster boy of the non-traditional CEO. Instead of hitting the fairways like many businessmen, the former national swimmer reserved triathlon 10 years ago.

It's his route to the middle years of the body getting "soft."

Asked why more business leaders are seen less marathons and triathlons, he cites the movie "The Bucket List," where an extreme physical challenge is one of the must-do's before "kicking the bucket" (dying).

He wakes up at five a.m. and rides the bike on Mondays and Thursdays at Heritage Park, runs around the village on Tuesdays and Fridays, and swims some 1,000 m at Manila Polo Club on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Between the morning run and lunchtime swimming on Fridays, he attends regular meetings. On Saturdays, he bikes up to five hours.

A few Sundays ago, Uytengsu and the little triathlon team biked from Alabang to Batangas. For energy, he ate banana bread and antioxidants for breakfast; replenished his energy with gels, protein bars, Gatorade and water along the way, and finally rewarded himself with a hearty lunch at a friend's place in Puerto Punga.

With a 55-hour work schedule every week, his goal is to pump up 15 hours for triathlon training. At 47, Uytengsu shows unflagging energy. He has competed in Ironman triathlons in the US, Singapore and Australia. From an initial record of

HOW THE CEO (C)

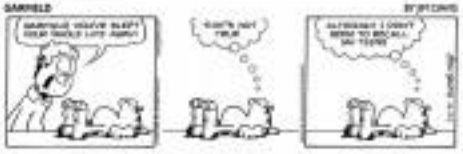
The Mommy Forum

SHE ROCKS MY WORLD!

Dr. Edwards saved my baby!

DARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



A-UPIN

BY JOE ABERIA

PUGAD BABOY

BY PAL SANOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEANGETS

BY ELIZABETH CHOONGLO

JAMES BOND

BY JAMES SCOTT

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEPHEN PASTIAN

SHORT FUSES

BY JIMMY SCOTT

TULDOK

BY MARK COLL

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMIC AND WIDDY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

HORROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

SIKO MACHINE

BY MANS ABERIA

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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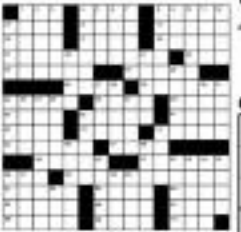

Freedom's Puzzle Solved

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dan Good

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 6.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	5	6	9	4
7	6	4	8	2	3
8	3	9	5	1	7
2	9	6	3	7	5
5	7	8	4	6	1
3	4	1	9	8	2
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3	4	1	9	8	2
9	1	7	2	5	8
4	5	2	7	3	6
6	8	3	1	4	9

How the CEO becomes an Ironman

Turn page B1

75k in swim, 20-km cycle and a 5-km run, he's upped his ante eight times since.

His personal best is 13 hours and 12 minutes in the Ironman Australia in 2006. His goal is to improve his record to 12 hours and 45 minutes or better.

Uytengsu has learned his lesson from working hard, not smart. In his early races, he once crossed the finish line extremely exhausted that he required IV.

Now he follows sports periodization, the method of subjecting a training regimen of periodic time intervals that results in peak athletic performance. The preparation increases aerobic capacity and improves skills. Then, the body is trained to be more efficient in longer workouts; once it has adapted, the training becomes more intense but close to shorter duration.

To prepare for a big race, the training is tightened to let the body recuperate.

Defining moment

Understanding the value of working smarter, he signed up with an online coach whose protégés are Olympic champions.

Uytengsu clarifies, "He can't lead me up like a 25-year-old pro. I still have my career and family life. It's a matter of balancing time and intensity with other priorities."

He adds that improvement isn't achieved by extreme abuse. "You must be willing to endure discomfort. Anyone who has done this will see it's part of the game."

His advice to weekend triathletes: "Train within your heart level. It's not usually ego and ability. In all workouts, we use heart rate monitors to determine the exercise level."

The workout not only gives him a high as the endorphins kick in, but he also describes it as "defining" and "introspective."

"Many times in the morning, you're swimming, biking or running, then something will come to you. When you're out on a long journey, it gives you a chance to think clearer," he says.

Uytengsu's dedication has resulted in great payoffs aside from a toned body with less than nine percent body fat. "It comes to the office with a clear head after a 90-minute workout," he says.

He has set an example of passion for work which is shared by his managers.

On Monday's business, he says he wants any "spike (in profits)," eventually, to be global outlook.

Although he has taken up the sport late, the 47-year-old CEO-triathlete can only think of improving. Aware of the realities of aging, Uytengsu cites Olympic medalist Dara Torres, who at 41, is much lighter and 2.41 seconds faster than her Olympic record at age 21. At middle, she believes the first months of retirement is reserved for the Olympic events.

"I don't want to put obstacles [on myself]," declares Uytengsu. "There are great stories of people like Dara who did better much later in life."

WELLNESS
Steven "Yuyi" Uytengsu

SOFITEL's gym is perfect for yoga and meditation.

SO FIT is the only hotel gym in the country that has the Kinesis range of top-of-the-line exercise equipment.

Fitness redefined

By Christian F. Unsong
Contributor

WITH ITS SPECTACULAR VIEW OF MANILA Bay, an iconic music lounge, and a chic concept restaurant that's currently all the rage among the city's fun-loving socialites, hotel Philippine Plaza certainly knows how to offer guests a unique hotel experience. So when I accepted an invitation to check out the hotel's new 24-hour fitness center, I naturally expected more than just the usual hotel gym experience.

So Fit is located on the second floor of the hotel's fitness complex, so I had to just through the rear hulk of La Spa, Sofitel's luxuriously designed haven of relaxation, to reach the hotel gym. The spa's peaceful ambiance had an immediate calming effect on my mind and spirit, a perfect prelude to a physical workout. The first thing that jumped at me was So Fit's expansive space. Plenty of room to move around safely and enjoy my exercise—I immediately liked the place.

Then there were the cardio machines. I tried a few for size, but cross-of-the-art treadmills in So Fit's irresistible company, elliptical trainers, stationary bikes, rowers and elliptical trainers. I was immediately drawn to the four Life Fitness treadmills. These ultramodern, interactive machines feature a virtual trainer with touch-screen technology that can customize a workout program based on the user's fitness level and track performance, and allow treadmill users to customize personal heart rates. They offer several options to challenge your endurance: cardio, sport, fit and jog.

Using the treadmill's integrated console and switchable TV monitor, you can watch your favorite TV programs or listen to your favorite while burning calories. Bring your USB flash drive and save your performance data, such as calories you've racked up. If you want to see something other than the panoramic view of Manila Bay while on the treadmill, mount a bike bottom on the window and choose one of several "virtual adventures"—work out, around the world, cascades, Kilimanjaro.

Clearly Sofitel spared no expense in outfitting the gym in order to live up to its name. So Fit is the only hotel gym in the country that has the Kinesis range of top-of-the-line exercise equipment, which offers users of all fitness levels virtually unlimited possibilities. This high-tech range of progressive resistance equipment and free weights offers customized workouts such as pull-down, seated leg curl, leg extension, hip abduction, chest press, lunges, rowing, squat and abdominal, dying bicep, triceps, and core exercises. Kinesis is manufactured by Technogym of Italy, a world leader in the design of fitness equipment. I looked up the company's credentials on the Internet and found that Technogym was the official supplier to the Olympic Games at Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Turin 2006 and Beijing 2008.

With such high-end hardware, So Fit, I assumed, would only hire the best people. I assumed right. All So Fit fitness instructors are licensed by the American Council on Exercise, more importantly, they had a customer service-centered work ethic to complement their professional expertise.

If there's anything to Fit fitness instructors take seriously is customer satisfaction. It is customer safety. A thorough screening and interview by a full-time coach to find out information about the client's current health status and assess his/her "physical activity readiness". A confident certificate attesting to the client's health and fitness clearance by a licensed physician is mandatory. Only after the doctor gives the client the go signal will the fitness instructor begin the process of identifying the client's fitness objectives and planning his/her exercise program.

For me, a corporate executive and fitness enthusiast who travels quite a bit, So Fit is your hotel gym that fits the bill. Since I'm into Pilates, finding out that So Fit (unlike other hotel gyms I've visited) offers group exercises for yoga, taekwon, step/kick-boxing, and cardio-boxing was icing on the cake. So was the post-workout tonics, herbal and lifebody massage I plan to have at La Spa.

Enjoy the special perks of BDO Rewards. Be a member now!

What motivates you to exercise

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

THE THREE MOST COMMON reasons for exercising are fun, weight loss and health. Identifying motives can help you choose physical activities that are best for you. There are also psychological motives like managing stress and improving mood.

James Gavin, author of "The Exercise Habit", presented six motives that help one commit to exercise. These are: to look good, to be more sexually alive, to feel young, to lose weight, to improve health, and to take control of negative addictions.

Vanity

Studies do say that if you make exercise a long-term commitment, you will feel more positive feelings about yourself.

Focus on activities which target body alignment and definition, such as weight training and calisthenics, versus those activities that neglect body alignment like golf, jogging and leisure walking. Incorporate cardio and flexibility exercises like dance and yoga.

Health

A study by Dr. Ralph DeBusinger in the New England Journal of Medicine shows that a person adds two hours to their lifetime for every hour of exercise.

Focus on moderate and non-stressful aerobic exercises such as walking, jogging, cycling, swimming and low-impact aerobics, rather than highly competitive and high-risk activities like bodybuilding and contact sports. Consult with a health professional before you begin your program.

Weight worry

Balance healthy eating with an appropriate amount of exercise that suits your preferences, style and fitness level.

Focus on increasing caloric expenditure and activities of long duration with moderate intensity, such as jogging, cycling, pool running, aerobics and circuit training, rather than anaerobic and short-duration activities such as bodybuilding and volleyball. Incorporate at least some a week of aerobic training to avoid the decrease of muscle mass, which will make you ineffective in burning more calories even while at rest.

Youth

There are five different levels of functional ability in the older adult population as stated in the book "Physical Dimensions of Aging." Physically Dependent individuals are those who cannot even bathe, walk or use the toilet. But you can still consider yourself in the "Physically Elite" level if you create special activities in your life by maintaining an active lifestyle as early as you're be classified under the Physically Elite, which is the highest level.

If you are concerned about sustaining youth, choose activities that target your whole body with complete exercise programming in cardio, strength and flexibility. These include body sculpting using weights, low-impact aerobics, swimming and yoga.

Sexuality

A study by Linda DeVilbiss of 5,000 women who exercised aerobically at least three times a week for three months or more shows that 40 percent in the aerobic fitness group, 31 percent in the resistance training group, and 28 percent in the control group reported increased sexual arousal.

Study of women who exercise aerobically thrice a week shows increase in sexual arousal

28 percent found it easier to reach climax.

Effective activities which focus on body awareness and expressive like aerobics and ballroom dancing, yoga and belly dancing, rather than bodybuilding and hard-contact sports, which impair emotional expression.

Get rid of addictions

According to Dr. William Glasser, exercise is a positive addiction should meet the six criteria: 1) The activity is non-competitive and feeds classes. 2) Easy to do and without excuses/pressure. 3) You can do it alone. 4) It has physical, mental or spiritual value for you. 5) Improvement and success is measured only by oneself. 6) It is done without self-criticism.

Go for physical activities which include an injury prevention program like low-impact aerobics, running, with swimming, or other cross-training activities.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

THE BOOK: (from) Pilg Tiyanan (photographer), Bert and Pet Briaro, Butch Dalisay (writer), Eugene Ong (printer), Lisa and Mar Lee, Jimmy Laya, and Maxie Chuan (designer)

AEP CYNTHIA Villar, Sen. Manny Villar, Mimi Fabella, Bert Briaro, Pres Ramos

FORMER Prime Minister Omar R.A. Hersa, Czech Ambassador Jaroslav Gedra, Jimmy Laya, former Pres Lady Imelda Ramualdez Marcos

3 friends launch book on their 'hidden treasures, simple pleasures'

CINDERELLA'S Feliciano Carreon, Ate Perla, Lisa Lee, Emma Abreu, Cita Carreon

HIGH Sandoval, Charo Santos, SEC chairperson Fe B. Barin, Dr. Sonia Lapa Zinampan

HMS Lucimco, Nelia Bengzon, Mon Leong and heart specialist Amelia Asuncion

THREE BUSINESSMEN FRIENDS, Jimmy Laya (company independent director), Mar Lee (handicraft exporter) and Bert Briaro (office equipment distributor), launched a book on their private collection, "Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures" where the authors' interests, which include a wide range of objects, from coins to paintings to sports cars, from ceremonial porcelain to travel souvenirs, from a golf cup autographed by Tiger Woods to a full-fledged golf course [in Dasmariñas].

Speaking for the authors, Laya described the contents as consisting of "objects we hold dear and the simple pleasures we take in them. There are objects that, for some reason, we like. Memories of people who loved us, the people we loved, the lessons we eavesdropped. Souvenirs of distant places, works brought from across the seven seas. Remnants of happy times. Things that we thought as little boys to be unattainable, impossible dreams."

Held at the Manila Polo Club, the launch was attended by friends of the authors from business circles, the diplomatic corps and Manila's social orbit.

Present were Spanish Ambassador Luis Alfaro Romero, Italian Ambassador Roberto Aloisi Pedde, Czech Ambassador Jaroslav Ludva and Serbian Chargé Ambassador and Mrs. Hariel Jovic. Still recovering from a recent eye operation, former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos, collector par excellence, was present.

An enthusiastic Sen. Manny Villar and Rep. Cynthia Villar greeted the affair as did Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Richard Gordon. Former government cultural agencies were Natividad Lifiray-director Nina Cruz, National Historical Institute chairman Ambeth Ocampo, Intramuros administration head Atty. Maria L. Isabel Garcia, Cultural Center of the Philippines president Nestor O. Jacinto.

Copies of the book were presented to the National Library's Cruz and GSIS Jacinto. Proceeds of the launch went to ABS-CBN Foundation Recovery Bayan, Bata Para Sa Buhay, Bridge Trek Training Center Foundation, Hour Center Foundation and Marikenore Inc.

FORMER BCDA head Jun Reyes and Lisa Lee

AMBASSADOR Benny Tan and wife Emma

PETER Cayton, Dr. Tan Yinglan, Mar Lee, HSBC president Mark Wakeman

Keep distance from energy vampires

INSIDE OUT
Gary Quinlivan

"Energy begets energy, just like love."—Gary Q.

THE BODY NEEDS TO PRODUCE great amounts of energy to maintain physical and emotional stability.

Main sources of food energy include carbohydrates (rice, bread, pasta, fruit juices, cereal, starchy vegetables like squash, broccoli, cauliflower), fat (oils, butter, high-fat dairy, eggs yolks) and proteins (meat, fish, poultry, leafy vegetables).

Here is an astounding list according to Dr. Phillip Mehlhorn, "In Fitness and In Health." The more energy you source from list, the better your fitness level. And the more relief you get from burning through emotion, the more balanced your health. Therefore try to derive the first source of energy from the list next, then to worst oils, then like seconds, fish oils. The third ratio is energy from 70 percent oils, 30 percent sugar.

Burning this, it is good to energize the energy vampires.

Diet—An eating regimen based on 40:40 percent sugar and 12 percent fat basically a high-carbo diet.

Mental starvation—Denying yourself a meal, especially breakfast, will lower you substantial all day. Withholding solid food any smaller you work and upset your hormonal system, giving you mood swings and lethargy.

Self-diagnosing—If you are not a doctor, don't self-diagnose, prescribe or medicate yourself. Identifying your mind plus faith in medical science will slow down your brain and weaken your body.

Misuse of exercise—Spent energy means more energy levels for you. So don't be afraid to exercise regularly or take up a new sport.

Toxic relationships—Think about the times when you felt more energized. And remember the company you kept during those times. There may be some people in your life who require your energy in order to sustain themselves. So, keep a safe distance from them.

Worry level—The average person produces thousands of thoughts a day. Thinking your way through life barely registers, usually, but a power and draining effect on you. Plus, no nagging heart can weigh you down and eventually bother it, too.

Neurotransmitters

Enhance the capacity of your brain for energy because these neurotransmitters:

Dopamine—We for stimulation of your heart, good metabolism and healthy circulation.

Norepinephrine—One of the happiness hormones, including endorphins. It promotes feelings of beauty, calm and clarity while fighting depression and stress.

Natural energy: lean meat, fish, chicken, turkey, low-fat cottage cheese, organic eggs, almonds, nuts, soybeans.

Or take the supplements like tyrosine and Diphenylalanine.

Life exam

It's time to take stock of your life. Get into your heart's core to determine your desire. Is there something lacking? If so, define the energy you need to attract into your life. Try to get into a higher level of communication and spirituality.

Healing—Have a clear picture of the ideal situation you wish to happen for yourself.

Chakra—Select a chakra on the ideal situation.

Affirm: Declare our load with faith and assurance. "The great and the good are my birthright."

Love and light!

Pagan origins of the Christian faith

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime I. Licauco

I OFTEN GET ANGRY letters from conservative Christians when I write on religion and/or the Christian Bible. They point out that my interpretation of the Bible is wrong and that I'm confusing people, or if their interpretation is the only correct and valid one.

A reader named Diana was incensed by my column title, "Psychic abilities are gifts of the Holy Spirit," saying I am completely misinformed and that I should keep my opinions to myself.

Another opposed my statement that "anybody can be possessed by evil spirits," saying that "true Christians can never be possessed."

These reactions merely amuse me. I have come to the irrefutable conclusion that one's degree of certainty about his or her religion is inversely proportional to his or her knowledge of the basic tenets of that religion. The more dogmatic or fundamental a person is about religion, the more ignorant he is about the origin or basis of his beliefs.

I used to think that way, too. Having been trained and educated in a conservative Catholic school, I have been brainwashed into believing that the Catholic religion is the only true and correct one.

Yet, ever since, during the time anyway, that "outside the Catholic faith there is no salvation," We were also forbidden to visit or attend non-Catholic church services. I also remember that in my theology class, other religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism were considered "sick creations" of the Catholic religion.

Divine

Now fortunately, Catholic and other Christian schools no longer teach the dogmas this false and divisive doctrine. But habits of thinking and confusion of mental conditioning really die hard, especially in this conservative and traditional-thinking Christian country. Ultra-conservative Christians still think the Christian Bible is the only source of knowledge about God and that it was God Himself who wrote or dictated it.

When you ask these people how they know it to be so, their inevitable reply, "because the Bible says so." Have you ever seen a more perfect example of circular logical reasoning?

I usually avoid discussions about two topics: religion and politics. Because there will be no end to arguments. But if I don't speak out and point out other views aside from those we have always heard from the priesthood, the evangelists and other believers, we will never grow in our knowledge of these matters.

All will follow blindly what Church authorities tell us, and accept only their interpretation of the scriptures, as if theirs is the only correct and valid interpretation.

So, at the risk of again being bombarded by angry letters, let me point out some historically verifiable facts about the true origins of the Christian religion as we have never learned it.

Not unique

Scholars now agree that Christianity was not a unique religion founded or established by a religious teacher and prophet called Jesus, whom his followers consider to be a God. I tried to find out where the basic ideas of Christianity originated. And what I discovered shocked me.

The story of Christ—a woman, the story of a God being crucified, then resurrecting, is not new at all. It did not begin with Jesus Christ. There were many stories like this even before Jesus Christ was supposed to have.

The story has its roots in ancient and pagan mystery religions. In other words, Christianity had a pagan origin. And it's not original at all except for one thing. The ancient pagan people did not think of the story of their dying and resurrecting God to be a real person, but was accepted by them as a myth or symbol.

Christianity, however, insisted that Jesus Christ actually lived as a real and historical person, and Christian theologians took laborious and meticulous pains to prove his historical existence.

According to author Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, in their thoroughly researched book "The Jesus Mysteries," the story of the "dying and resurrecting god" is the same story found in all ancient mystery schools, from Asia Minor (Attis) and Persia (to Mithraism) to Greece (to Dionysus) and Egypt (to Osiris).

In that book, the authors cite numerous parallels between the ancient teachings of pagan religions and those of Christianity.

Why don't we know this? Because according to the authors, the early Roman Catholic Church did everything in its mighty power to prevent the truth from coming out. It systematically and mercilessly destroyed and eradicated all teachings and literatures of pagan origin.

Isn't this the same attitude some Christians still have today, disavowing all beliefs that are different from or opposed to their own? So nothing has changed. Except that now not everybody is willing to accept everything the church dishes out.

This does not diminish the significance of Jesus Christ in his or I can control. The story of Jesus is the story of every man. He are the gods that came down from heaven as human old. He will all die, but will live again as he did. Isn't that relieve the power of the Jesus story to us?

For inquiries or books, personal seminars and seminars on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Soulmates, Karma & Reincarnation conducted by Jim write, call 8630240, 09209096, fax 8159606, connected book "The Jesus Mysteries," the story of the

Editor Bernie G. Yabut

ENTERTAINMENT

Entire Beatles catalog remastered

LONDON—APPLE CORPS LTD. AND EMI MUSIC ANNOUNCED last week that a digitally remastered version of the Beatles' entire catalog will be released worldwide on Sept. 9, the same day as the release of a video game, "The Beatles Rock Band."

A boxed set named "The Beatles in Mono," with their original monaural versions of 10 albums plus two further discs of mono versions of rarely released, out-of-likewise be released. AP

So lite, so heavenly!

You're the 1. Goldilocks.

ANGKUSTTIKULES (from L) Brandi Jones, Joy Alvarez, Pinky Marquez, and Bo Cornado: "Like living married."

Disparate voices in fine harmony

By Rayona Stuart Santiago
Contributor

THEY HAVEN'T DISbanded, the members of the musical comedy group Angkusttikules remained so.

In barangays very much in step with the times and would want to call themselves simply as Angk

Formed 16 years ago, the quartet originally took its name from the King Cole's signature tune: "Unforgettable," whose version by her daughter Natalie also became a hit in the early '90s.

Angk's members then were Rhea Ilarali, Maureen Sorrentino, Dycoki Javier and Baby Marquez. It was well received in the club and theater lounge circuit, as well as corporate events and

When Ilarali and Sorrentino left for, Bo Cornado and Joy Alvarez were recruited.

"Since then, intact as, we haven't stopped traveling the world. Ship-wreck you on you," says Marquez in a recent gathering at Club Filipino in San Juan to announce a benefit show on April 24 at the Cultural Theater.

The jokes start rolling, as Javier bursts in: "*Dearly* song a boy did't."

And when somebody asks, "Baka *repeats break ma*?"—Javier changes gears and quips, "Theater were to have repeats."

Comedic shenanigans, but become Angk's very own ballad style, which has always been the image as a solo artiste. Yet he considers that joining the group was "stepping out of the box."

Cornado's style initially with Angk has made him look up to Javier as an older brother, but the reference to filial closeness provokes a quick exchange.

Javier: "Malapit na Jeremy machismo."

Cornado: "Bati ulanan lang hindi magkaanakan."

Angk's stage act, which dishes out witty repartees, arias or stories to get boring due to an easy rapport that is based on the members' solid friendship. Apparently it's a kind of friendship that arises out of exploring what's fun—and lasting.

The group agrees that an members' relationship is "al your like betrayed me."

Disparate voices

In a sense, Angk is a mandate of disparate voices that blend seamlessly into one. Many times the jokes in between the music can be disparaging, but are all taken in good faith.

Most importantly, Angk is a marriage of minds.

Asked to comment on the present crop of Filipino performers, Javier admits, "What can we say ... not much really."

Cornado follows that up by noting that young singers have become dependent on lipsynchronization—a practice he dislikes because it affects the spontaneity of a performance.

(CONTINUED ON 32)

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A rock jam for the ages

CLEVELAND—METALLICA, whose pounding, monstrous sound has banged heads around the globe for decades, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on April 4, in a ceremony that seemed like a concert from an avenue down.

For the first time, the event was open to the public.

Many in the crowd came to pay homage to Metallica, which earned top billing in an eclectic 2009 class that included rap pioneers Run-DMC, 60-plus guitar hellbent, soul singer Bobby Womack and R&B vocal group Little Anthony and the Imperials.

Metallica's induction was a chance to celebrate its legacy as perhaps the hardest band to ever rock the mob. "My mind was blown," said Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea as he began presenting the band. "I mean punk rock. It wasn't heavy metal. It just mostly by itself."

The evening ended with a jam for the ages as Metallica, Flea, Jimmy Page, Aerosmith's Joe Perry and Flea brought the house down with a performance of the Yardbirds' "Train Kept A Rollin'." AP

Disparate voices in fine harmony

Pressmeet Ctr

Wee bee pool, Manipol says the new batch of performers must start singing more from the heart, and not just copy their idols' techniques.

When Classics Pempengco's scene is mentioned to no one's pic. Marquez spikes: "She needs work," but otherwise she's good."

Somebody asks, how about Aimee Pamela? "He was chosen at the right time, on the right year," Manipol says. "Somebody's sang'yan."

Grenado adds, in a jesting manner: "The right look?"

Alvarez responds: "Right look ba't I don't like his hair."

When the discussion veered on a recent Imposter Entertainment forum that discussed the idea of an ABSBN concert records, Aimee turns dead serious: "The substance of the issues is to give proper respect to the Filipino artist, and to support that in every way possible."

Why, indeed!

He then asks, "Why are great performers like Mitch Valdez not seen on TV? Why are there many musicians going abroad and not given a chance to carry pinoy's money here? Maybe because the demand is always for somebody who's young, with a high pitched voice, with good cleavage ..."

As Alvarez makes an effort to look at her cleavage, the room bursts with laughter.

(The show dubbed "Kanyahan, Kantentuhan, ... Kayang-Kaya with the Angel" is for the benefit of the Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines Inc.)

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MOVIEWORLD

SUNDAY - MAY 3, 2009 - 8AM

Celebrity trivia

HERE ARE SOME CELEBRITY TRIVIA which I picked up along the way to "Cine-Investigacion." Sweet little "nuts-things," anyone?

•The tattoos imprinted all over **Robin Padilla**'s body are more than just art. Each tattoo has a story behind it.

•Al Al Ai has also developed a fear of ghosts. The Comedy Queen also ought to be called "Ating Queen" because she loves to sleep.

•**Lorna Tolentino** is the most cool of all time in Tess (and mine, too). If honesty is much Tess at the sun is the perfumer shop where we eat fresh eats.

•While **Cee Dribon** was climbing up the mountain during her captivity, she kept crying to herself, "What I would do to have a glass of wine right now!"

•**Ogie Alcasid** is hooked on Facebook's "Scrabble" feature.

•**Gabby Concepcion** isn't fond of watching himself on TV. He cringes almost over his cameo scenes in his old movies on TV.

•**Cesar Montano** gets a kick out of watching TV ads where he's dressed and rescued his favorite cigars.

•**Jaclyn Jose** panicked when she woke up and saw red spots all over her face. It turned out that her bubbly Bebot was in a playful mood as he played red dots using Bench pen on her face while she was asleep.

•**Dingdong Dantes** sleeps with his eyes half-open.

•**Diether Ocampo** has quit drinking (even tuba) for many years now. It makes him feel more alive.

•**Dennis Trillo** was an agent for a telecommunications company before he joined showbiz.

•**Regie Tongson** isn't really singing in a karaoke bar.

•**Lizel Martinez** doesn't like eating fruits.

•**Regine Velasquez** rarely lets others do her make-up. She would rather do it herself. Her dad Rising Avey once told me, "Hahahahaha ang mahal ng make-up nya!"

•**John Regala** doesn't drink cold beer to preserve his voice.

•**Sid Lucero** flagged me PCD copies of all his TV appearances ever since she started in the biz.

•**Alex Gonzaga** is a chocoholic and loves to drink hot cocoa.

•In her younger years, **Sheryn Regis** used to pretend she lost her voice when losing remembered by outspoken speaking fan in english English.

•**Yvilloux Martinez** is allergic to watermelon.

(I must warn kapatid na Jaclyn so that she can avoid watermelon.)

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

TRILLO: Forever unknown agent

VELASQUEZ: Don't let size mislead you

CONCEPCION: Has a surprising love for TV

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

FRIDAY THE 13th / PG 13 — 2:15, 5:45, 9:15, 10:45

THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 4 / R 13 — 2:45, 5:15, 7:30, 10:00

DRAGON BALL: E / GP — 1:45, 3:00, 4:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

T-2 / R 16

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS / GP — 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00

DRAGON BALL: E / GP — 2:45, 4:30, 7:00, 9:15

EXTRA CINEMA 7

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE / GP — 12:30, 3:00, 5:45, 8:30

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 MONSTERS vs ALIENS GP — 12:30, 2:15, 4:20, 7:00, 8:40

2 DRAGON BALL PG 13 — 12:40, 2:45, 4:50, 9:55, 9:00

3 FRIDAY THE 13th R 16 — 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

4 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE PG 13 — 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

T2 PG 13 — 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

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DRAGON BALL: EVOLUTION - PG13 — 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE - PG13 — 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

T2 - PG13 — 12:00, 2:15, 5:00, 8:00, 10:30

FRIDAY THE 13TH - R16 — 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:00, 10:15

FAST & FURIOUS 4 - R16 — 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

'Uploaded!' by Moymoy

LIP-SYNCHING DJ/DJ MOYMOY PALABOY has become a real and proper recording act with the release of its debut album, "Uploaded!" (Sony BMG). A look at some of the other from the nine-track collection—including "Laguna Ka Marcos Lakbay," "Bang by Bay," "Ang Angkol Mo," and "Chokie Barrio"—is proof that the humor which propelled the mad-life brothers into a hot YouTube phenomenon is now moving beyond its visual attraction. But even so Aaron Bonald (a.k.a. Moymoy) and Ronald Allyn on the mic to let everyone know that's not singing voices in "Uploaded!", they have given listeners a lo-fi-ish DIY concoction all the music videos that jumpstart's off their covers.

'Tagalized' versions

Max Gundo and David Idol are two Pinoy artists which Polymer Music Philippines has signed to record 'tagalized' albums aimed to capture a small salted Tagalized versions of current pop hits. The songs, notably Max Gundo's "Parang," and David Idol's "Bow Lang ang Mapia," are not novelty dreadnoughts so, but completely faithful Tagalog translations of Rihanna's "Umbrella" and David Gundo cover of "Always Be My Baby," respectively. Max Gundo's expressive, native translation by Andrei Dicaldo, is included in the "Hip Hop" CD, while David Idol can named because he reportedly is a big fan of Gundo has rendered, by himself, all 10 tracks in his debut record "Tagalized Film."

Taylor Swift's 'Fearless'

American country-pop singer-songwriter Taylor Swift's second album, "Fearless" (MCA Music), features the single "Love Story" which went to the Top 5 of the Billboard Hot 100 in just two weeks, and has sold more than 3 million digital downloads. The album itself debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

'Bunch of Brothers'

Sony BMG is promoting three rock acts—AC/DC, Kings of Leon and Guns—as "Bunch of Brothers" since all of them have siblings as members. AC/DC, back early in 18th studio album "Black Ice," has the Young brothers Angus (lead guitar) and Malcolm (rhythm guitar). Leading to personnel, Kings of Leon, whose fourth and latest album, "Only the Night," has been certified five times platinum (more than 5 million copies sold) in the United Kingdom, has three Followed brothers in its lineup: Lead singer-rhythm guitarist Caleb, drummer Nathan, and bassist Jared; cousin Matthew plays lead guitar. Guns 'n' Roses, of course, Slash (born Saul Hudson), of course, Duff McKagan he also is Guns and Nose as lead singer and lead guitarist, respectively. The British band's eight album, "Dig Out Your Soul," has been certified platinum in the US.